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ABSTRACT

This document is intended to help the rehabilitation professional identify and understand current and future labor market trends and their implications for persons with disabilities. Strategies, methods, and tools are included that counselors can immediately use as they prepare persons with disabilities for the workforce. Chapter 1 examines economic forces and labor market trends, as well as current workforce issues. Employment patterns and trends for people with disabilities and opportunities available through computer technology are addressed. Chapter 2 explores new ways to think about the concept of "work" and the skills needed by consumers to compete effectively in the environment created by new and different employment opportunities. Chapter 3 reviews skills used by counselors to assist consumers and the ways in which these skills may be modified to take advantage of the employment market trends. Chapter 4 reviews resources that provide vocational rehabilitation counselors with substantial information to assist consumers in making informed career choices. Chapter 5 considers the role of leadership in establishing and maintaining a vocational rehabilitation agency that makes its primary organizational goal the employment of persons with disabilities. Appendices include labor market information divisions and job bank resource listings. (Contains 53 references.) (CR)

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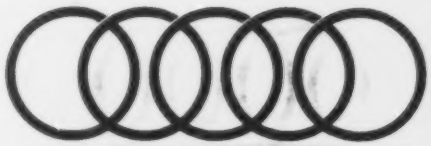
Meeting Future Workforce Needs

May 1999

Daniel C. McAlees, Co-Director



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Report from the Study Group on

Meeting Future Workforce Needs

Twenty-Fifth Institute on Rehabilitation Issues
Washington, DC
May, 1999

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The IRI process begins with the solicitation of topics for the Prime Study Groups to study. We acknowledge the efforts of the Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation (CSAVR), the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA), and state vocational rehabilitation agency administrators who submitted topics for study consideration.

The IRI National Planning Committee meets, discusses the topics, and selects those determined to be the most relevant for study. We acknowledge and appreciate the work that was done by that committee.

We wish to thank the state vocational rehabilitation administrators who nominated individuals to serve on this Prime Study Group. Serving on a study group is a considerable commitment in time and effort, and we appreciate the fact that state administrators allowed their employees time to participate in this group.

Most importantly, we want to thank the members of the Prime Study Group (page iii) responsible for this document. These are the real authors who did the thinking, critiquing, writing, and rewriting of 100 percent of the content. This publication represents their hard work, which included three meetings of several days each and involved many hours in between those meetings to complete writing assignments.

We wish also to acknowledge the work of the Full Study Group (page v). These individuals took the time to read, discuss, and critique this document. Their feedback was invaluable for further improving the quality of this document.

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Finally, Jean Davis of the Center for Continuing Education staff composed this document. The attractive appearance of the document you are about to read speaks for her efforts.

Jean Radtke
IRI Study Group Coordinator and Editor

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Introduction

The millennium is upon us, stirring thoughts of what life will be like in the twenty-first century. Although we cannot predict precisely what the future holds, we do know with certainty that it will include significant changes in the workplace. Already, the way we work, where we do our work, and the skills needed to compete effectively for employment are noticeably altered. It is essential that rehabilitation professionals keep pace with evolving employment trends if they are to effectively assist consumers to meet the challenges and take advantage of the opportunities created in this emerging world of work.

Already, the way we work, where we do our work, and the skills needed to compete effectively for employment are noticeably altered.

The purpose of this document is to help the rehabilitation professional identify and understand current and future labor market trends and their implications for persons with disabilities. This is not a new responsibility or activity for rehabilitation professionals. The field of rehabilitation has always kept its eye on trends in employment and guided persons with disabilities to those opportunities offering the best options for employment. However, the changes occurring now are more far-reaching and fundamental, and it is essential to understand that the foundation, the structure of the workplace, is rapidly changing. No longer is it sufficient to simply keep abreast of fluctuations in where job opportunities will likely occur. It is now also essential to understand the implications of the changes taking place in the employment market. For example, long stretches with one employer, which provided opportunities to rise on a career ladder, and career ladders themselves, may no longer exist. Such long-term association with one employer, once viewed as evidence of stability, today may be viewed as stagnation, lack of creativity, or skill development. To successfully compete in this changing environment, rehabilitation professionals and consumers must be able to read the changing signs and anticipate the skills and attributes needed to be competitive.

To successfully compete in this changing environment, rehabilitation professionals and consumers must be able to read the changing signs and anticipate the skills and attributes needed to effectively compete.

It is also true that the nature of counselors' caseloads is changing. With advances in technology, individuals with more significant disabilities can be expected to present challenges for counselors as they partner with consumers to develop viable employment opportunities. Counselors must have a solid understanding of employment trends and be able to impart this knowledge and its implications to consumers. This document offers to the counselor that necessary information about emerging workforce trends and the skills consumers need to compete effectively in this changing labor market.

It is hoped this document will stimulate ideas and thinking about the skills and methods rehabilitation counselors need to prepare this workforce. The intent is to increase the counselors' knowledge so they in turn can provide optimum information about wise vocational choices to consumers. Strategies, methods, and tools are included that counselors can immediately use as they

prepare persons with disabilities to successfully participate in the workforce of the future and secure greater opportunities to achieve competitive employment at a living wage.

Chapter I examines economic forces and labor market trends, as well as current workforce issues. Employment patterns and trends for people with disabilities and opportunities available through computer technology are addressed.

Chapter II explores new ways to think about the concept of "work" and the skills needed by consumers to compete effectively in the environment created by new and different employment opportunities.

Chapter III reviews the skills used by vocational rehabilitation counselors to assist consumers and the ways in which these skills may be modified to take advantage of the employment market trends. Implications of the emerging trends for consumers and the vocational rehabilitation system are explored.

Chapter IV reviews many available resources that provide vocational rehabilitation counselors with substantial information to assist consumers in making informed career choices.

Chapter V considers the role of leadership in establishing and maintaining a vocational rehabilitation agency that makes its primary organizational goal the employment of persons with disabilities. The Baldrige Award Criteria for Performance Excellence provides the framework for a vocational rehabilitation agency in its assessment of where it stands in this regard and where it should be.

The intent of this document is to identify change and how it will affect future relationships with consumers, employers and other community partners. It is hoped that what is written here will provide a basis for rehabilitation professionals to understand the implications of the changes occurring in the world around all of us and will better prepare them for future challenges.

As a final word of caution, the only thing one can say with assurance when predicting the future is that the future will bring change.

Note: Throughout this document the term "consumer" is used to identify persons with disabilities who may be elsewhere referred to as "client" or "customer." "Vocational rehabilitation (VR) counselor" is used to identify individuals who might be elsewhere identified as "counselor" or "employment counselor." "Customer" is used to identify persons with whom the VR agency conducts business external to the agency (e.g., employers, vendors, government, community partners) and in Chapters III and V refers to consumers also.

Chapter 1

Environmental Forces

Environmental Forces

Abstract

This chapter examines current and future economic forces and labor market trends facing workers, with special attention to how these may affect persons with disabilities. It summarizes labor market trends in the overall demand for and supply of workers, and identifies the fastest-growing occupations, the skill requirements of new jobs, and the differences in job growth by region. In addition, the chapter discusses evidence on a number of current workforce issues, including the growing importance of education and training, the use of temporary and other contingent work arrangements, the risk of worker displacement, employers' demands for "high-performance" workplaces, and the growth of telecommuting and other home-based work, among other issues. Employment patterns and trends for people with disabilities and the opportunities opened up by computer technologies and home-based work are reviewed.

Overview

Looked at from afar, the nation's labor market appears to be functioning faultlessly. The unemployment rate is very low and firms continue to hire more and more workers despite headline grabbing announcements of layoffs by major companies. Moreover, short- and long-term employment forecasts call for more of the same. In the short term, most forecasters are repeating their last year's forecast that called for continued but slower growth in the next two years.

The U.S. Department of Labor's (DOL) long-term forecast (1998) calls for total employment to grow by 1.3 percent per year through 2006. While manufacturing employment is forecasted to continue its modest decline, employment in service-producing industries is expected to increase by 2.9 percent per year, with employment in personnel supply services expanding by 4.3 percent per year and employment in computer and data processing services soaring at 7.6 percent per year. In other words, employers are expected to upgrade and expand their computer services and networks while increasing their use of flexible staffing arrangements, such as hiring a greater number of temporary employment agency workers.

While the demand for additional workers is expected to increase by 1.3 percent per year (not counting the added demand for replacement workers to fill the jobs of retirees or individuals changing occupations), the supply of workers is expected to increase by only 1.1 percent annually. Through 2006, employers are forecast to increase their payrolls by 18.6 million workers, while the civilian labor force is expected to grow by only 14.9 million individuals. In short, labor markets are expected to remain tight in the long-term.

If this forecast holds true, it could mean that real wages will increase and income inequality will lessen. Research evidence suggests that lower unemployment rates have a greater impact on

low-wage earners than high-wage earners. Individuals with low skills or who face multiple employment barriers enjoy a greater number of opportunities to move up at their current employers or to switch employers for better pay or working conditions when unemployment rates are low.

Continued advancements in computers and other industrial machinery will cause the demand for technicians, professionals, and computer specialists to become even stronger in the coming years. At the same time, forecasts call for only marginal productivity gains in the faster growing service and retail sectors, meaning that there will also be an increase in low-skilled, low-paying jobs, as well. Indeed, the DOL's long-term forecast calls for continued growth in both high-skilled, high-paying jobs and in low-skilled, low-paying jobs, but very little change in the middle range. If true, this will stimulate greater income inequality. In addition, it is likely that individuals with weak educational and training backgrounds may work very hard for a long time and gain little advancement in pay or position.

Although the long-term forecast calls for tight labor markets in the coming years, short-term economic fluctuations will cause the nation's economy to periodically stray from its long-term growth path. In the short-term, powerful forces including changing technology, international competition and changing workplace management techniques will jostle the nation's labor market. Rapidly improving computer and communication technologies are allowing employers and workers to be more mobile and "footloose." For example, the Internet is making it easier for workers to explore employment opportunities world wide, while advancements in communications are allowing employers to enlarge their search for new cost-effective production locations (e.g., check processing in Ireland). International competition and excess capacity in many commodity-producing industries have nailed the lid shut on producer prices, forcing negatively affected employers to turn toward cost-reduction strategies to increase profits. To become more cost-effective managers are pushing more responsibility to the shop floor, eliminating management layers, exploring flexible staffing arrangements, and using production teams.

Looking to cut their costs, employers are re-examining the traditional workplace model where permanent jobs are offered and the changing ebbs and flows of the market are handled by altering overtime hours or, in only serious incidences, changing the size of their workforce. Today, more flexible staffing arrangements are being used: Independent contractors are taking on "noncore" functions that used to be performed in-house; temporary employment agencies and employment leasing firms are supplying workers on an "as needed" basis; and more company workers are on-call or work irregular, part-time hours, again as needed.

Many employers are frustrated by the current tight labor market. First, their new computer-enhanced machines require highly skilled workers who are in short supply. Second, in manufacturing, more and more production is being completed by teams. However, many human resource managers are adopting flexible staffing strategies that can decrease workers' loyalty and commitment to the firm, traits that are required for production teams to be successful. Third, employers complain that they cannot find workers with basic "workplace know-how skills" (e.g., basic reading, writing and math abilities; social skills; and personal management skills).

Despite the nation's low unemployment rate, the likelihood of layoff has increased in the past 10 years. Across all workers, there is currently a one-in-nine chance that a worker will be laid off

over a 3-year period. Layoffs are often accompanied by extended periods of joblessness and by decreased earnings for those who do find new jobs. The negative effects of a layoff are greatest for those who have skills that cannot be transferred to new jobs; those who have college degrees and general skills have much better outcomes following layoffs.

Developing such broad, transferable skills not only will help an individual's progress within an organization but will increase the ability to find good alternative employment in case of a layoff. While one must often be willing to accept lower wages following a layoff, having broad-based skills that can be readily transferred to new jobs clearly enhances employment and earnings prospects.

While geography matters less for businesses and for highly educated workers who through the Internet can explore job opportunities worldwide, it matters greatly for individuals living in poor and increasingly isolated urban neighborhoods and rural areas. Most employers have already left these areas for suburban locations, leaving residents physically isolated from employment opportunities. Moreover, these individuals are increasingly socially isolated from employment since they have very limited access to informal job networking opportunities.

In short, changes in the American workplace pose many challenges for both existing workers and labor market entrants. The rapidly changing nature of many technologies and product markets has increased the risk that workers will be laid off or be required to learn new skills and take new jobs and responsibilities within an organization. These developments put a larger burden on individuals to assume responsibility for their careers and to gain access to broad-based education and training that will enable them to cope with a changed job situation. This should include not only specific job skills (which may become obsolete as jobs change) but also communication and problem-solving skills that increase adaptability and ability to work in multiple environments. Such communication and problem-solving skills are becoming increasingly important in many workplaces that use self-managed teams and consultative arrangements to solve workplace problems.

Currently only half of all working-age people with disabilities, and only 20 percent of people with significant disabilities, are employed, compared to 80 percent of working-age people without disabilities. (Figures vary based on inclusive/exclusive definitions of "disability" and how "employment" is integrated). The employment gap between people with and without disabilities is similar for men and women, but employment rates are particularly depressed among people with disabilities who are African-American, older, and with no more than a high school diploma. In addition, the average pay of employed people with disabilities is lower, which probably reflects a combination of lower productivity and employer discrimination. Lower employment and lower earnings are major factors in the lower overall income levels and higher poverty rates in the disability population.

The employment of people with significant disabilities, however, has been improving in the 1990s, and the projected tight national labor market should enhance employers' willingness to hire people with disabilities. In addition, new computer technologies and the growing trend toward home-based work appear to especially enhance the employment and earnings of people with disabilities. New information technologies that put a premium on intellectual and interpersonal skills offer solid employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities who have kept up with the changing business environment. On the other hand, many jobs, especially low-skilled positions,

lack health care coverage, which block many people with disabilities from entering the workforce. Resolving the health care dilemma will become even more critical in the future for individuals with disabilities.

Preparing individuals with disabilities for the demands of tomorrow's workplace will be the main challenge for rehabilitation services. Workforce preparation services must address workplace know-how skills and technology training, especially for older workers. Furthermore, career development must emphasize long-term follow-up and support to assist individuals in retaining their jobs.

The current tight labor market presents both opportunities and challenges for the state vocational rehabilitation agency. Business customers are willing to partner with public and private workforce development agencies in their pursuit to lower production costs and remain competitive. However, to make these partnerships work, the public vocational rehabilitation system will need to increase quality, service, innovation, and customer responsiveness; in short, they have to operate like a business.

Long-Term Labor Market Trends

The U.S. Department of Labor's long-term employment forecast calls for (a) current tight labor market conditions to continue until 2006, (b) the nation's workforce to become older and slightly more diversified, and (c) a growing dichotomy in labor demand between high-skilled, high-wage jobs and low-skilled, low-wage jobs.

The nation's labor force is forecast to increase at a 1.1 percent annual pace through 2006, down from a 1.3 percent annual rate recorded in the previous ten years (1985-1995). At the same time, employment growth is also expected to slow in the coming years from 1.7 percent to 1.3 percent per year. During the 10-year period ending in 2006, employers will seek to hire 18.6 million additional workers, while the ranks of the nation's labor force will increase by only 14.9 million individuals, creating a shortfall of 3.7 million workers. Of course the number of job openings, which is the result of both new growth and required replacements of retirees and occupation changers, will be much greater. In fact, the U.S. Department of Labor forecasts that job openings due to replacements will reach 32 million over this time, which combined with net employment growth means that the total number of job openings will be 50.6 million.

Through 2006, it is expected that:

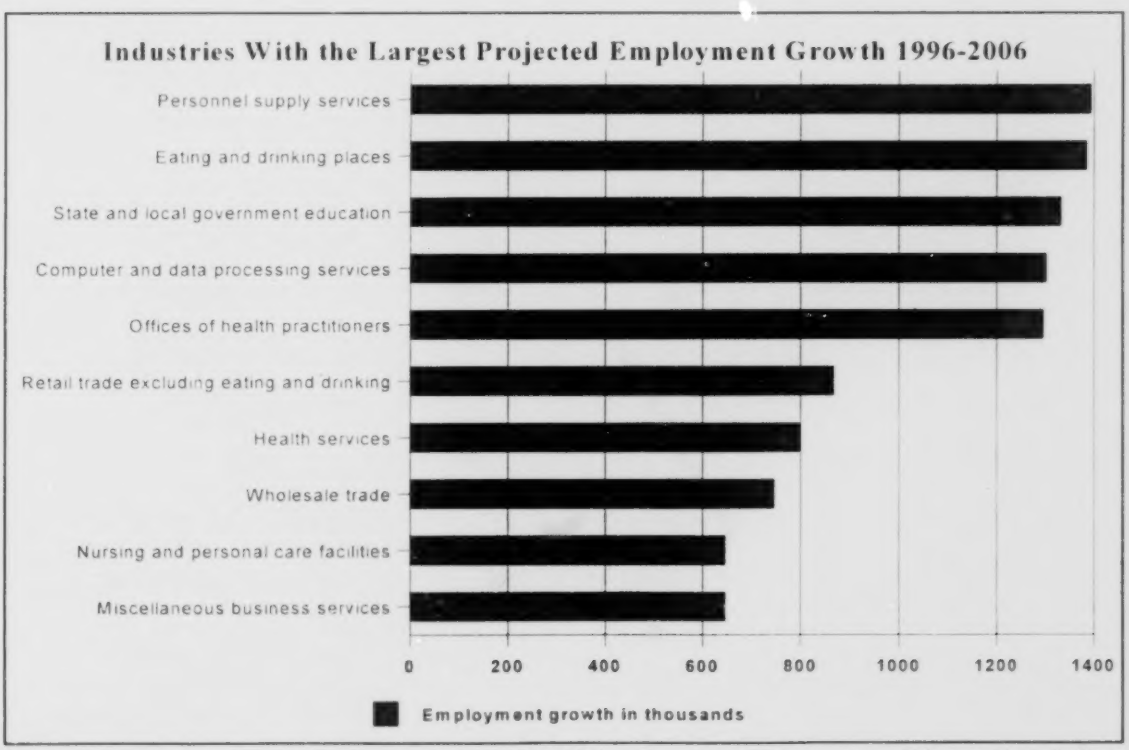
- The workforce will become older (the proportion in the 45 - 64 age range will grow from 28.8 percent to 36.2 percent, and the number of workers between the ages of 25 and 44 will decline by 4.1 million);

- The workforce will be increasingly nonwhite and Hispanic (white non-Hispanic workers will decline from 75.3 percent to 72.7 percent of the workforce, while the Hispanic workforce will grow at 3.1 percent per year); and

- The participation rate of aging baby boomers, born between 1945 and 1960, will remain high (the participation rate of those age 45-54 will rise from 82.1 percent to 84.6 percent, and the rate of those age 55 - 64 will rise from 57.9 percent to 62.6 percent).

While employers' demand for additional workers is expected to be 1.3 percent per year through 2006, there is a large variation in growth rates among industries, as indicated on Chart 1. The type of industries that are expected to achieve the fastest employment growth in the coming years should come as no surprise and, indeed, point to the changing workplace and aging of the nation's population. The fastest growing employment sector is personnel supply services that includes temporary and leasing employment providers, reflecting the growing efforts of employers to make their human resource expenditures more directly tied to demand fluctuations. All aspects of retail trade employment are expected to expand due to (a) the inability to make substantial productivity improvements in the provision of retail services and (b) the expected increases in real income. Computer and data processing services that reflect our growing dependency and use of computer processing as a management and production tool rank fourth. Offices of health practitioners and nursing and personal care facilities, along with other health services (not elsewhere classified) are all among the top ten fastest growing industries, reflecting an aging population and a general greater demand for health care services.

Chart 1

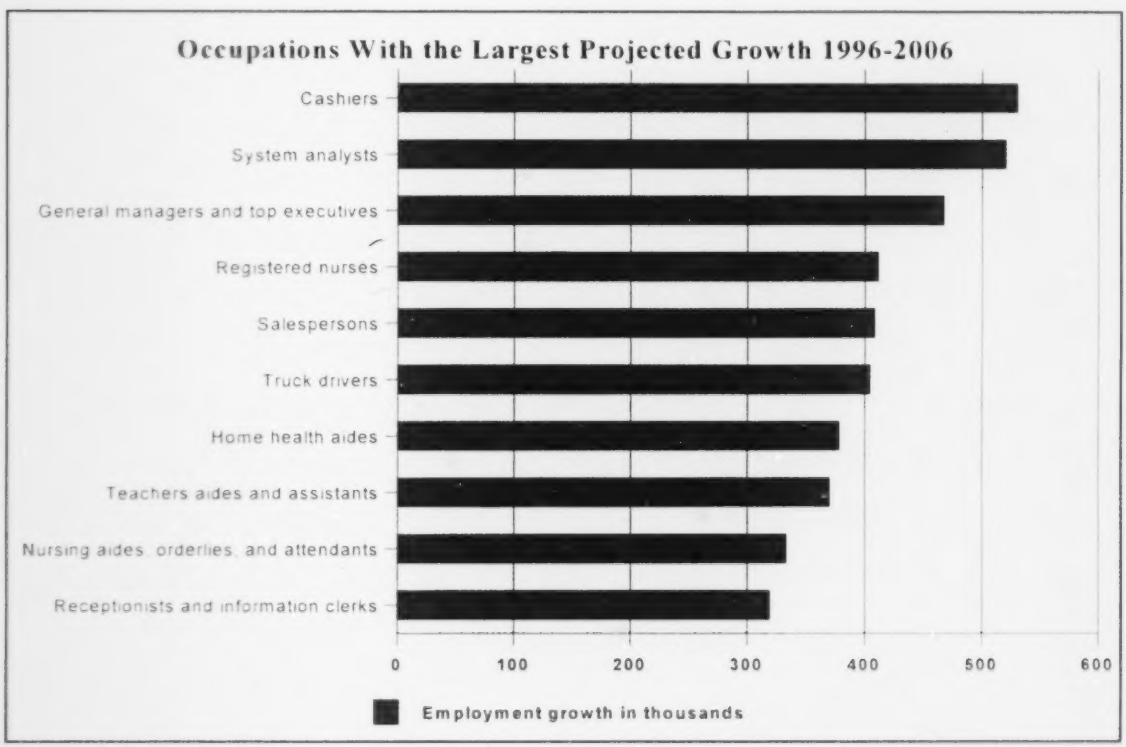


Source: U.S. Department of Labor *Employment Outlook, 1996-2006: A Summary of BLS projections*. February, 1998. Bulletin 2502.

Chart 1 also provides evidence of the growing dichotomy between high-skilled workers and low-skilled workers. Computer services and the offices of health practitioners are two industries that demand high-skilled workers, while retail trades and nursing and personal care facilities reflect industries that demand low-skilled workers.

This dichotomy is more easily shown in Chart 2 below, which lists the U.S. Department of Labor's forecasted top 10 fastest growing occupations through 2006. While the low-skilled occupation of cashier captures the top spot, it is closely followed by highly skilled system analysts. Employment growth for registered nurses, a high-skilled occupation, barely surpasses retail salespersons. In all, 5 of the U.S. Department of Labor's 10 highest growing occupations require modest skills and pay poorly, 4 are high-skilled and pay well, and only truck drivers are in the middle with medium skills and medium pay.

Chart 2



Source: U.S. Department of Labor *Employment Outlook, 1996-2006: A Summary of BLS Projections*. February, 1998. Bulletin 2502.

Additional evidence regarding the growth of low-skilled jobs is presented in Table 1 below. Less than 25 percent of the job openings expected during the ten-year period, through 2006, will require a bachelor's degree or higher and are in occupations that paid, on average, 154 percent of the average 1996 median weekly earnings of full-time workers (U.S. Department of Labor, 1998). At the same time, 43.4 percent of all job openings will require only short-term, on-the-job training and

are in occupations that paid only 70 percent of the average median weekly earnings in 1996.[1]

Table 1
Job Openings and Median Weekly Earnings by Education and Training Category

Education & Training Category	Job Openings 1996-2000 (thousands)	Percent of All Job Openings	1996 Median Weekly Earnings
All occupations	50,563	100	483
Bachelor's degree or higher	12,296	24.3	744
First professional degree	582	1.2	1,057
Postsecondary education or training below Bachelor's degree	3,943	7.8	510
On-the-job training or experience	34,323	67.9	397
Long-term on-the-job training	3,466	6.9	490
Moderate-term on-the-job training	5,628	11.1	434
Short-term on-the-job training	21,944	43.4	337

Source: U.S. Department of Labor

A major debate regarding the large number of low-skill, low-wage jobs is whether individuals holding these jobs have the ability to move into better-paying positions. If all low-paying jobs were occupied only temporarily by individuals moving up to better careers, then the predicted growth in job openings in these positions would be of little concern. College students waiting tables or working at shopping malls during Christmas break do not represent a problem. The concern is that a growing number of individuals will remain in low-wage occupations due to the lack of training or education and have few options to move up. Evidence suggests that for many workers this does appear to be the case and certainly has implications for people with severe disabilities and people with multiple disabilities (see Appendix A).

Most research continues to support the notion that returns to technical and professional education are expected to remain significantly positive in the coming years. Most economists believe that the "skilled-bias of technological change" will continue to generate strong returns to postsecondary education and training. However, it is important to note that the estimated strong returns to education do not necessarily reflect a robust employment outlook for college-educated workers, but more that the outlook for high school graduates is particularly dim. High school graduates face a much harsher employment outlook today than twenty years ago for a variety of reasons, including:

[1]The U.S. Department of Labor's definition of short-term, on-the-job training is when "workers generally can develop the skills needed for average job performance after a short demonstration or up to one month of on-the-job experience and instruction."

- The decline in manufacturing jobs that paid good wages for minimal skills,
- The decline of unions,
- The deregulations of several industries including telecommunications that paid good wages for low-skilled work, and
- The resulting growth of service jobs that pay poorly and offer limited upward mobility.

Employment growth is not expected to be uniform across all regions of the country. According to Bureau of Economic Analysis (1995), employment growth will be the strongest in the Rocky Mountain and Far West states, and more sluggish in the Mideast and Great Lake States as shown in Table 2. Total employment is expected to top 20 million in California in 2005 and grow at an annual rate of 1.8 percent through 2005. Employment in Arizona, Colorado, Florida, Nevada, and Utah is forecast to grow at or above 2.0 percent per year through 2005. Employment in the eastern, industrial states of New York, Michigan, and Pennsylvania along with Iowa and West Virginia is expected to reach, at best, a 1.0 percent annual growth rate during the same time period. However, the rapidly changing manufacturing environment in the "rust belt" states may make these forecasts too pessimistic.

Table 2
Regional Employment Forecast
(Thousands)

Region	1993	2000	2005	Percent Growth 1983-1993	Percent Growth 1993-2005	Percent Growth 2000-2005
United States	140,617	157,656	167,817	2.0	1.5	1.3
Rocky Mountains	4,633	5,417	5,883	2.5	2.0	1.7
Far West	22,810	26,191	28,428	2.4	1.9	1.7
Southwest	14,364	16,507	17,724	2.0	1.8	1.4
Southeast	33,160	37,593	40,211	2.5	1.6	1.4
New England	7,531	8,373	8,873	1.0	1.4	1.2
Plains	10,946	12,082	12,724	1.8	1.3	1.0
Great Lakes	23,437	25,693	26,976	1.9	1.2	1.0
Mideast	23,735	25,799	26,997	1.2	1.1	0.9

Current Workforce Issues

While the long-term economic forecast calls for tight labor market conditions to continue, current business trends and pressures are changing the face of human resource management. Moreover, there are significant threats that may pull the economy's growth down to a snail's pace. In particular, the nation's manufacturing sector is facing several severe issues. First, excess world capacity across many industries is pushing prices lower. As foreign countries attempt to export themselves out of their current economic problems, many of our commodity-producing industries, such as steel and paper, are facing serious import competition. Second, many of our industries, such as food products, are facing mature/saturated domestic markets that are forcing them to seek cost-cutting, labor-saving strategies.

Businesses operate in a highly competitive environment. Businesses that are unable to increase prices, are scrutinizing human resource expenditures as a place to cut costs. Two major human resource strategies are emerging: (a) moving noncore activities to low-cost producers and (b) using more flexible staffing strategies where workers' hours become more closely tied to the volume of demand.

Current Demands of the Labor Market

It is highly likely that any conversation with employers regarding their current workforce will turn to a discussion of the lack of workplace know-how skills among entry-level workers. Many employers are having difficulties in attracting skilled workers and will admit that they have long-standing, unfilled vacancies for skilled computer programers, machinists, and/or technicians. Yet in study after study, employers claim that they are not seeking trained workers for many of their entry-level positions, instead they are looking to hire individuals who are trainable. They often readily complain about the lack of basic social and academic skills of their entry-level workers. A commonly used term to describe these skills or abilities is **workplace know-how skills** and they include:

- **Basic academic skills** - reading, writing, and math;
- **Personal characteristics** - honesty, responsibility, creativity, and positive attitudes;
- **Task achievement competencies** - attendance, punctuality, appropriate attire, flexibility, and problem solving;
- **Behavior with respect to organization** - understands and embraces mission, safety awareness, and takes and follows directions;
- **Interpersonal skills** - teamwork skills, works well with co-workers, respects diversity, sociability; and
- **Basic verbal skills** - ability to communicate.

Due, in part, to their frustration in finding individuals with solid workplace know-how skills, more and more employers are turning to flexible workforce arrangements. About 40 percent of firms use at least some temporary agency workers, and the total number of temporary agency workers totals 1.3 million. Looked at more broadly, close to 10 percent of the workforce are in flexible staffing arrangements, covering temporary workers, independent contractors, on-call/day laborers, or workers provided by contract firms. Those who are in "contingent" jobs, defined as jobs expected to last less than one year, constitute 4.4 percent of the workforce as of 1997. While some workers like flexible arrangements, 60 percent of contingent workers would prefer more permanent jobs. Using a broader measure of the contingent workforce, about 20 percent of workers are in part-time, temporary help, or independent contractor jobs. Such jobs tend to pay less and have fewer benefits (such as health insurance or pensions) than traditional full-time jobs (Cohany, 1998; Blank, 1998).

There are several commonly accepted reasons why employers are attracted to flexible staffing arrangements such as the use of temporary employment agencies' workers, short-term hires, contractual workers, leased workers, on-call workers and part-timers:

- *Batch jobs are giving way to customized short-run projects, creating a dynamic and irregular demand for workers. Flexible workers serve as a buffer protecting the company's permanent workers.*

  For example, temporary workers are nearly always the first to be let go when business slows. Additionally, when work unexpectedly picks up, the use of temporary workers allows the company to avoid hiring new workers only to lay them off when the business returns to more sustainable levels.

- *Temporary employment services provide a screening device for employers to determine, first hand, if an individual can do the work.*

- *Workers under flexible staffing arrangements, in general, receive lower compensation than permanent workers.*

  In particular, benefit packages are far less for part-timers, on-call workers, and short-term hires. Furthermore, companies are not responsible for benefits to independent contractors nor temporary employment service workers. While it is true the company must pay a service fee to the temporary employment agency, their total wage and benefit costs of using temporary workers is, on average, lower than for their permanent workers.

- *The use of temporary workers allows the company to avoid the potential costs associated with labor dismissal issues.*

Flexible staffing arrangements have their drawbacks, however. First, for positions requiring on-the-job training, it is very possible that the company will not be fully reimbursed for the training costs of flexible workers because of their high turnover rates and short-term employment duration. Second, as more and more firms turn toward team production methods, many are finding, not surprisingly, that they cannot obtain the required sense of loyalty and company commitment from their temporary workers.

Indeed, the use of flexible staffing arrangements may harm employers' attempts to gain a higher level of performance from their workers. In the past 20 years, there has been increasing attention to how firms are organized, particularly to how employees are treated and integrated into the organization. To a greater extent than before, employers are tapping employee skills, ideas, and effort through both formal and informal means. This trend is driven in part by the growing importance of product and service quality, which employees are often in a good position to observe and affect directly (as opposed to the costly procedure of having separate quality inspectors). It is also driven in part by an increasing need for flexibility in the production of goods and services, as technologies and markets change rapidly–road-based skills and cooperation from engaged employees can greatly help firms adapt to these changes.

One of the principal ways employers have been tapping employees' skills and ideas is by involving employees in workplace decision-making. These programs range from regular employee meetings discussing work issues, which 75 percent of all firms have, to self-managed teams where employees have substantial say in organizing the work, which just slightly over 30 percent of all firms have (Kruse & Blasi, 1998). These types of programs have often been shown to enhance workplace performance. To ensure that workers have broad-based skills and can be quickly re-deployed as markets or technologies change, close to half of firms have job rotation programs for non-managers, where employees are regularly rotated among jobs to increase their skills and knowledge of the firm's operations. In addition, about 75 percent of firms provide formal training programs to employees in a given year, although only slightly over half provide formal training to clerical employees and production workers. Each of these programs is more common in large firms (more than 250 employees), although they exist in many small firms as well.

A growing number of firms are combining these changes in how work is organized with synergistic changes in other policies to create "high performance workplaces." Some firms make changes in the reward systems, using individual bonuses to motivate good individual performance, and profit sharing, employee ownership, and gain-sharing plans to motivate teamwork and cooperation. Research finds that these plans can lead not only to higher average performance but also to more stable employment for workers. Some firms also combine the above policies with explicit promises of employment security so that employees need not fear that any increases in productivity will result in layoffs. Finally, some firms are also using rigorous selection and recruitment systems in hiring and promoting employees to ensure that employees have the necessary skills and will be able to work well with other employees. In these and other ways, a growing number of firms are seeking to create a highly skilled and motivated workforce that has a sense of ownership and attachment to the firm. While this appears to be more common, it should be noted that only a minority of firms, even among large firms, currently combine many of these policies.

From the Point of View of the Worker

While a growing number of firms are seeking to involve employees in the ways described above, it is clearly true that many employees face job insecurity and uncertainty about whether the training and skills they have acquired will continue to be useful. There has been much popular attention to corporate "downsizing" in the 1990s and the need for employees to have skills that can be transferred to other firms.

The risk of a worker being laid off over a three-year period has gone up slightly from 10.7 percent in the mid-1980s to 11.4 percent in the mid-1990s (Kruse & Blasi, 1998). Workers who have been with a firm for a long time have a lower chance of being laid off, but even they have seen their chances of layoff increase in the past ten years. Only a minority of the increased worker displacement can be traced to international trade; the rest is due to corporate reorganization, general changes in product demand, and other reasons. The increase in layoff rates has been greater for white-collar than for blue-collar workers, although white-collar workers still had a lower chance of being laid off in the mid-1990s (about 6-9% over three years) than did blue-collar workers (about 14%). Also, workers with no more than a high school diploma have a higher risk of being laid off than workers with some college training.

Layoffs would not be a big concern if workers were able to find similar jobs fairly quickly, but many are not able to. Only about 66.5 percent of workers displaced in a three-year period have new jobs at the end of the period, and the time to re-employment is particularly slow for women, nonwhites, and those without a college degree. Also, those who are re-employed have a decline in earnings on average, with greater earnings losses for older workers, African-Americans, and those without a college degree. A substantial portion of the lost earnings reflect the lost value of skills that were not transferable to other firms or industries, highlighting the importance of general skill development for workers. In particular, the greater earnings losses for older workers partly reflects the growing importance of computer skills in the workplace, which older workers are less likely to obtain.

Important issues for workers entering today's labor market are training and education, as several of the above results indicate. The value of a college degree has increased markedly–young male college graduates in 1974 earned only 16 percent more, but in 1995 earned 56 percent more, than young male high school graduates. As discussed above, much of the increased importance of education is due to technological changes in the workplace. For example, over half of production workers now use computers in their jobs, a rate that has grown rapidly since the early 1990s. While some new technologies can require fewer skills of workers, most employers report a rise in the skills needed to perform production and support jobs, which is driving much of the higher pay for skilled workers.

The increased premium put on workplace skills raises the value not only on formal education but on formal and informal training at the workplace. Several studies have shown the value of training for future worker earnings; also, workers who receive workplace training are less likely to be laid off. About 75 percent of firms, and a little over 65 percent of employees, participate in formal training in the course of a year. The most common types of training concern occupational safety, computers, communications and quality issues, and professional and technical skills. Formal training is most common among workers who already have college degrees, are managers or professionals, and have been with the employer for at least five years; still more than 50 percent of other employees receive formal training in the course of a year. In addition, informal on-the-job training is an important source of skills for many jobs and, in fact, consumes twice as many hours as formal training for the average employee. Informal training is especially important in production and professional jobs and for workers who are just starting work with an employer (see Appendices B and C).

Continuing workplace changes often leave both new labor market entrants and existing workers uncertain about their future prospects and what they should do to develop secure careers. How has this affected worker attitudes and the workplace culture? Popular media have often used stories of downsizing to proclaim the end of worker loyalty to companies in the 1990s, but this appears to have been overplayed by the media. Looking at worker satisfaction levels over the past 30 years, indicates there has been a slight decline since the mid-1980s in the percentage of workers who say they are very satisfied with their work but no increase in the percentage saying they are dissatisfied. Some surveys do find decreases in worker commitment to employers, but strong majorities of workers still say they are proud to be working for their companies and disagree that they feel little loyalty to their companies. The slightly increased risk of layoff over the past decade, however, does show up in the finding that workers are more likely in the 1990s to expect job loss within the next year than they were in the 1980s.

A major factor in both the inability of many individuals to advance to better jobs and higher levels of income is the growing economic isolation of persons living in economically disadvantaged neighborhoods. The barriers facing individuals in poor, urban neighborhoods are two-fold:

1. *They are becoming geographically isolated from employment opportunities due to the movement of employers to suburban fringe locations.*

   Public transit is more focused on getting workers from the residential suburbs to the city's central business district than on transporting the city's inner-city residents to suburban employers. The only exceptions are for retail shopping malls and/or household services workers. For individuals living in small metropolitan areas, public transportation is extremely limited. Moreover, many individuals residing in inner-city neighborhoods do not have access to reliable private transportation. "Minor" car problems can cause new workers to lose their jobs; a dead car battery can be a job killer.

2. *In addition to being physically isolated, individuals residing in depressed, inner-city neighborhoods are socially isolated as well.*

   Living in neighborhoods where unemployment rates reach above 15 to 20 percent of the "official" labor pool, and the lack of job networks and informal contacts hinder individuals looking for work. In addition, a general environment of despair can have a negative effect on an individual's job search efforts. (Why look when there are no jobs available?) Finally, as individuals become more isolated from the employment experience, they lose any workplace know-how skills developed earlier and can become unaware of employers' expectations.

Work opportunities are also disappearing in rural communities, which are rapidly becoming more economically depressed. Individuals there experience similar geographic and social isolation, reliance on private transportation in the absence of public transit, limited employment and advancement to better jobs, and lower levels of income as exist in urban neighborhoods, with the same results.

People With Disabilities in the Labor Market

How do people with disabilities fit into the labor market trends and workplace issues discussed above? A limited but growing body of evidence is available to help answer this question.

What percent of people with disabilities are employed, and what are the recent trends in employment? The answers to these questions depend on the measure of disability that is used. About 11 percent of working-age Americans report a "work disability"–having a health condition that limits the kind or amount of work they can do. Among those reporting a work disability, about 20 percent are employed in a given week, compared to 75 percent of those not reporting a work disability.[2]

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) uses a broader measure of disability based on whether one is limited in any major life activities. The major government survey, using a broader measure based on activity limitations and functional impairments, estimates a total of 54 million Americans with disabilities, of which 29.5 million are working-age constituting 20 percent of the total working-age population. Among those falling under this broader definition, close to 50 percent are employed in a given month, compared to 80 percent of working-age people without disabilities. The figure is much lower among those with severe disabilities, of whom only 25 percent are employed in a given month.[3] Mirroring the pattern in the general population, women with disabilities are less likely than men with disabilities to be employed, and employment rates are especially low among people with disabilities who are African-American, older than 45, or who have never been to college (Kruse, 1998; Kruse, Trupin, Sebasta, Yelin, & LaPlante, 1997).

The lower employment rate among people with disabilities partly reflects higher costs associated with maintaining employment and lower productive potential associated with many disabilities, but it is likely that both isolation and discrimination play a role. As noted above, isolation can be a major barrier to employment prospects for the general population; this is likely to be a strong factor in the disability population due to the greater social isolation of people with disabilities (who are more likely to live alone, and less likely to engage in social activities, than people without disabilities) (Kruse, 1998; Louis Harris & Associates, 1998).

The ADA was designed to combat prejudice and discrimination that limit employment and participation in other activities by people with disabilities. While it is too soon to fully gauge its success, an encouraging sign is that the employment rate of people with severe disabilities has increased slightly in the 1990s (although the employment rate of people with non-severe disabilities has stayed fairly constant). This improvement may, however, simply reflect the effect of

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[2]From the federal government's Current Population Survey, an estimated 22.0 percent of working-age people with work disabilities were employed in the survey week in March, 1996, compared to 75.0 percent of those without a work disability (Yelin & Trupin, 1997).

[3]The most recent estimates indicate that 82.1 percent of working-age people without disabilities are employed in a given month, compared to 52.4 percent of people with disabilities, or 76.9 percent of people with nonsevere disabilities and 26.15 percent of people with severe disabilities.
(http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/disable/sipp/disab9495/asc9495.html).

increasingly tight labor markets in the 1990s, which tend to disproportionately help the employment of those in marginalized groups.

Among those who are employed, the average pay of workers with disabilities is lower. A number of studies have estimated that people with disabilities earn 10-25 percent less on average than otherwise comparable people without disabilities (Baldwin, 1997, p. 43). Some of this is probably due to lower productivity associated with many disabilities, but prejudice and discrimination against people with disabilities probably also play a role, as suggested by the finding that wage gaps are higher for people who have disabilities that elicit the most negative social attitudes.

The lower employment and earnings of people with disabilities contribute to lower economic welfare. Counting all sources of income, the median personal income of working-age people with disabilities is only 60 percent that of people without disabilities, indicating the various sources of disability income do not come close to making up for the loss of earned income. More importantly, almost 20 percent of all people with disabilities live in poverty households, which is twice the rate of people without disabilities.[4] While employment strongly decreases the chance of being in poverty, the lower earnings of workers with disabilities causes them to still be more likely than employed people without disabilities to live in poverty. Health insurance coverage, though, is very similar between people with and without disabilities, since greater Medicaid and Medicare coverage among people with disabilities mostly make up for lower levels of employer-provided health insurance.

New information technologies may particularly benefit the employment and earnings of people with disabilities by increasing their potential productivity. Computer use at work prior to a traumatic spinal cord injury (SCI) has been linked to faster recovery of employment following the SCI; also, those using computers at work following an SCI were found to have equivalent earnings to other computer users, while non-users of computers who had SCIs have lower hourly and weekly earnings than other nonusers of computers (Krueger & Kruse, 1995).

New technologies may also benefit people with disabilities by making productive work at home more feasible. This may be especially valuable for those with mobility impairments that make commuting difficult. The percent of workers doing any work at home for pay has increased more rapidly among workers with disabilities than those without disabilities, so that nearly 17 percent of workers with disabilities do paid home-based work compared to only 10 percent of workers without disabilities (Kruse & Hyland, 1998). This difference reflects the increased likelihood that people with disabilities will do self-employed home-based work. Somewhat surprisingly, home-based employees with disabilities are actually less likely than those without disabilities to use computers in home-based work, although they are just as likely to use other electronic technologies (fax, modem, voicemail, and telephone).

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[4]The poverty rate is 18.7 percent among all people with disabilities and 26.3 percent among people with severe disabilities, compared to 8.9 percent among people without disabilities (Kruse, 1998, p.16).

In summary, people with disabilities have lower employment and earnings levels, which contribute to lower income levels and higher poverty rates, but new computer technologies and the growing trend toward home-based work appear to be improving their employment and earnings prospects. The projected continuing tightness of national labor markets is also likely to benefit people with disabilities, by making employers search hard to find, attract, and make accommodations for qualified employees and disregard the stigma often attached to disability. Not all labor markets will be tight, however, and many people with disabilities have educational and training deficits along with other problems that limit their employment prospects. By enhancing the employability skills of individuals with disabilities, rehabilitation professionals will be paving the way for our economy to tap into an underutilized yet valuable human resource.

Key Points

- Overall employment growth is projected to continue to be strong, and unemployment rates low, which should particularly help people with disabilities as employers search hard for new employees.

- Employment growth is likely to vary, however, among industries, occupations, and geographical regions. There will be an increasing labor market dichotomy between skill and pay, as employment growth will be strongest among high-skill and low-skill jobs and weakest among medium-skill jobs.

- Contingent and flexible workforce arrangements have been growing, and layoff probabilities have been increasing, so that it is increasingly important for individuals to develop broad, transferable skills and work habits that are useful in a variety of work settings.

- Only 50 percent of working-age people with disabilities and 25 percent of people with significant disabilities are employed, and average earnings are lower among employed people with disabilities. However, tight labor markets, new computer technologies, and trends toward telecommuting and home-based work hold special promise for enhancing the employment and earnings of people with disabilities.

Chapter II

Skills and Tools Needed in the Future Workforce

Skills and Tools Needed in the Future Workforce

Abstract

The concept of a "job" as we have known it, permanent, full-time, and sustaining, is changing. Today one needs to think not about a job but rather about "work" as a process of different opportunities. Businesses are reducing their direct employee relationships and are operating through alternative work approaches. The workers of tomorrow need to develop broad capabilities, not necessarily specific skills. It is the purpose of this chapter to discuss these understandings.

The Emerging World of Work

Although *work* and *a job* are commonly treated as synonymous and are, therefore, used interchangeably, there are conceptual distinctions between the two that are by no means trivial. These differences need to be taken into consideration in any discussion of the impact of the changing work environment on individuals and society. Indeed, in light of the dramatic developments taking place in the organization of economic life, the distinctions between *work* and *a job* are becoming increasingly significant and are likely to remain so for the foreseeable future.

In essence, *work* is an activity, whereas *a job* is a status. *Work* is something we do; *a job* is something that is done with us. *Work* is a productive activity that is most often subject to our individual control. *A job*, particularly in modern industrialized societies, is a circumstance over which we generally have little influence and even less control.

The important distinction between *work* and *a job* tends to be obscured to a degree by the circumstance that, in an increasingly complex society, there are many kinds of highly rewarding *work* that can only be done in the context of *a job* in a relatively large organization. For example, it would be very difficult, if not impracticable, for someone to do serious biomedical research outside the embrace of an institution that provides the necessary laboratory facilities and other support.

Given these considerations, aspiring entrants into the labor market need to make two distinct decisions, the kind of *work* they want to do and the sort of *job* they wish to seek. As a number of companies no longer offer significant *career* opportunities, it does not appear to be prudent to attempt to respond to the specific job demands of an uncertain labor market, particularly if such preparation requires a long-term investment of time and resources. In this time of great change, corporations often cannot predict with any accuracy what their labor demands will be over the next five years, let alone in the more distant future. Accordingly, it may prove undesirable to prepare oneself for a particular career in employment that may not materialize. In this regard, the most prudent approach would be to have as strong a basic education and general skill development as possible. This would provide flexibility in responding to employment opportunities many companies expect to train new employees in specific job skills, but balk at employing those applicants whose basic skills, such as the ability to write English correctly or to use a computer

effectively, are wanting.

For the long run, it becomes increasingly important for individuals to develop a clear picture of the kind of *work* they want to do–the *work* at which they would like to excel–irrespective of the current market *job* opportunities. A truer opportunity may lay in self-employment or entrepreneurship, an approach that is being pursued successfully by growing numbers of people displaced from or disenchanted with the corporate world. Indeed, because of the business trend to outsource services, many people who have been displaced from the labor market have gone into business as contractors, performing the same kind of *work* they formerly did as employees. This trend

> . . . has resulted in a move away from the big old company model into little clusters of companies, as well as a proliferation of home businesses. That represents huge opportunities for small firms and independent professionals, who will become more and more a pool of people who get tapped for projects. Companies are no longer looking primarily for employees to fill a job; but instead look for talent (Bridges, 1994, p. 60).

The trick for the individual, therefore, is to do a realistic assessment of what they truly would like to work at and then to develop the skills to do it. Barbara Moses (1999, p. 120) has called this approach to career self-determination "career activism," and career activists "define themselves independently from their organization and take charge of their own career choices."

The restructuring of the business world is creating new and in many instances unprecedented opportunities for career activists, including those with disabilities. This is made clear in a 1994 report from the Australian National Board of Employment, Education and Training, *More Than Able: People with a Disability and Small Business*. These opportunities are emerging primarily because "sophisticated technology is relieving workers of repetitious and laborious work and they are now involved instead in the management and application of technology." To be successful in this new *work* environment, moreover, will require that those who would take advantage of the opportunities before them unlearn previous perceptions of *a job* and *work* and adapt to the emerging demands of the higher performance work place. "Workers are required to be multiskilled, with a combination of broad-based technical skills and generic skills . . . self-management skills and the ability to manage processes and resources . . . the constant pursuit of improving quality in all products and services will require them to be more innovative, creative and flexible." However, the report realistically acknowledges that "people currently suffering an employment disadvantage because of disability are likely to experience greater disadvantage" in getting their skills and abilities recognized. The barriers to success may be greater for them but are by no means impassable for those with the necessary determination.

The preponderant approach to the world of *work* over the past century has been that of obtaining *a job* with an employer that would afford long-term stability of income and hopefully opportunities for advancement within a company. Unfortunately for many who may continue to maintain this approach into the century before us, it is becoming increasingly out of touch with the realities of the changing work environment. In the emerging world of *work*, the traditional notion of a long-term *job* is being supplanted by that of an "assignment," which by its nature may be

temporary. Accordingly, the challenge of the changing world of *work* is not only to find remunerative *work* but also to sustain it. A critical first step for those who wish to prepare to take up the challenge is the adoption of a new paradigm or mindset that is essential to success.

One helpful formulation of such a paradigm is Bissonnette's (1997) *Mindset for Cultivating a 21st Century Livelihood*, reproduced here by courtesy of Milt Wright & Associates.

Table 3
Mindset for Cultivating a 21st Century Livelihood

Mindset for Seeking Traditional Employment	Mindset for Developing a 21st Century Livelihood
Sees a limited job market	Sees a world of possibility
Employment is something you *get*, a job is something you *do*	Work is something you *do*, opportunity is something you *make*; livelihood is part of who you *are*
Takes a passive approach to the work search; reacts to the whims of employers	Takes a proactive approach to cultivating a livelihood by responding to the needs of the business community
Earning a living means having a regular, permanent job	Earning a living means participating in the workforce in one or more of a variety of ways, a "job" being one option
Defines work by the duties and minimum qualifications of a job	Defines work by the results produced or needs met
A "job" is the only acceptable work situation	A "job" is one of many acceptable work situations
Goal is to secure a "position" in a stable environment	Goal is to position oneself well in a constantly changing work world
Sees businesses primarily as "employers"; a structure built out of jobs	Sees businesses and organizations primarily as providers of products or service to customers; a domain in which work needs to be done
Sees scarcity of identified employment opportunities	Sees abundance of as yet unidentified employment opportunities
Perceives work as a prescribed set of functions and tasks that are boxed into "a job"	Perceives work as the use of energy, skill or personal resources to bring about desired results; an undertaking, enterprise, project, endeavor or job
Responsibilities of the job are set according to job description; job duties are relatively fixed and predictable	Responsibilities of work arrangement vary with the ever-changing needs of the workplace; flexible in nature
Views oneself as a contender for jobs in the competitive world of work; seeks to present oneself in the most positive light according to the specifications of existing job orders	Views oneself as a mircobusiness; seeks to hire the right employer or build a network of employers within which a variety of work situations may co-exist

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Mindset for Seeking Traditional Employment	Mindset for Developing a 21st Century Livelihood
Job-holder is paid in accordance to a fixed formula or pay level, typically by number of hours; wage or salary-based	Worker may be paid in exchange for results, outcomes or completion of assignment; fee, wage, or salary-based
Based on the way it has always been; how we were brought up to think in the industrial world	Based on new realities of post-industrial world, information and service economy
A "job" provides a safe haven in an insecure economic world	A "job" provides a short-term work setting for an indefinite period of time
Job search ceases when employed	All work situations are springboards for other opportunities; cultivating one's livelihood is a process that never ceases

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Whether using the above paradigm, or some other means, embracing these new concepts becomes essential if individuals are to take full advantage of the opportunities created by the changes in the way *work* and *a job* are viewed and made available.

Alternative *Work* Opportunities

Given the fundamental changes that appear to be reshaping the way work is being accomplished in North America, and the ways in which that is also reshaping our historical notions of "career paths" and "making a living," how are individuals going to get work in the future? How will they market their skills? Generate a steady income? Carve out a livelihood? The answers to these questions are not entirely clear, but many people are already beginning to grapple with these issues. Increasingly, people are choosing (or being forced) to abandon rigid notions of "jobs." In order to make a living, they are adopting creative and flexible strategies to take advantage of the opportunities within their grasp.

Until three years ago, Ricco had made his living as a researcher, securing a series of term positions with several different companies. For the last three years, however, Ricco has been self-employed. Working as an event manager has been his primary source of income, but he has supplemented that with freelance writing and small research projects. Just recently, Ricco accepted a position as a researcher that will employ him four days each week for the coming year. He is pleased because this will give him one day/week to earn additional revenues as a freelance writer and songwriter. He is also pleased that this new job will give him the additional flexibility of working from his home one or two days every week.

Consuela is a manager in the Human Resources Department of a major corporation. When her husband was recently offered a position in a city several hundred miles away, her employer agreed to let her retain her position through telecommuting. She now does approximately 65 percent of her job from home and is in her actual "office" for only one week each month.

Due to downsizing, Tom just left his position with a large financial institution and has set up his own business. As a contractor, he is presently managing a new project for a community college, helping to develop an Internet-based job-matching service, and selling consulting services in disability management.

Carla has worked as an assembler in the manufacturing plant of a high tech company for the past two years. Last month, she was told that her employer had signed a contract to have all their manufacturing jobs filled through a temporary staffing agency. Carla will no longer be employed by the high tech company. In order to retain her position, Carla will have to become an employee of the staffing agency.

These are not uncommon stories. Most of us increasingly encounter friends, relatives and associates who are similarly engaged in "nontraditional" ways of making a living. We are aware that the traditional workplace is changing and that there is now more flexibility to accommodate some of these nontraditional approaches.

These new forms of *work* are more than just interesting variations on our traditional modes of work. They are more than just fringes on the edge of our traditional approaches to *jobs*. Rather these are the early signs, the precursors, to a massive revolution that is reshaping the manner in which *work* is organized, distributed, and accomplished in North America. In the twenty-first century, this revolution promises to render our current definitions of "jobs," "careers," and "employment" obsolete.

> "The single salient fact that touches our lives is that work is being reinvented" (Peters, 1999, p. 118).

As a critical resource to persons with disabilities, rehabilitation professionals need to understand the dramatic changes that are taking place. They must work with a close eye to the new challenges and opportunities that will arise. To be effective, the discipline of rehabilitation counseling must grow in concert with these evolving realities.

Work not a *Job*

In seeking to make a living today and into the future, it is becoming increasingly counterproductive to focus solely upon the traditional notion of *a job*. Since the early 1900s, *a job* has been the predominant method for distributing *work* in North America. This is changing.

Companies have traditionally taken all the *work* that they needed to do and organized and packaged it into portions that could be accomplished by one person applying about 40 hours of labor each week. They would then hire someone for each of these "packages." Primarily, these packages were considered to be indefinite and permanent. We called these packages *jobs*.

The Dell Computer Corporation has 15,000 employees, but CEO Michael Dell (Batstone, 1999, p. 121) claims that he would have to hire 65,000 additional employees if the company did everything in-house. This doesn't mean that less *work* goes into providing Dell's products and services, it just means that most of the *work* is not being accomplished by the traditional model of creating more *jobs* within the company. The *work* itself is still there and people are making money doing it! This is a good example of Bridges's observation, "Change doesn't kill opportunity. It relocates it."

Like Dell, many companies are now finding that hiring people into long-term *jobs* is often not the most effective way to get their *work* done. At present, it seems, the last thing most companies want is another employee, but they will have a lot of *work* to be done. Again, Bridges (1994, p. 63) observes, "The organization will not only be deciding between 'building or buying' the parts it uses in manufacturing, but between employing or contracting for every single activity it requires in all phases of its business."

"As a professional, age 56, I can honestly say that I live the new formula: I = My Projects...all work of economic value is project work. Work today is about two things: talent and projects. Welcome to your life in the projects" (Peters, 1999, p. 118).

Increasingly, *work* is being made available in packages that are of much shorter duration, that may or may not be done in-house, and that may or may not be done by an "employee." According to Janis Foord Kirk (1999, p. 66), "Work will be packaged in units of every conceivable form, and sometimes not even packaged at all, existing instead as a gleam in someone's eye." Because of the new ways that work is being packaged, most individuals will have to be prepared to make a living, not by securing a great long-term "job," but by creatively securing and combining a number of different work "packages" throughout their lifetime.

A *Business* not an *Employee*

As traditional *jobs* decline as the dominant method for accomplishing *work*, it will be increasingly counterproductive for workers to operate from an *employee* mindset.

The most useful paradigm for success in this new world of *work* is for individuals *to see themselves as their own business*. This will be a key concept for those who will successfully trade their skills, talent, and experience for *work*.

Each individual is like a business with an inventory to sell. That inventory consists mainly of aptitudes, talents, skills, knowledge and experience. To be successful, an individual must continually develop, upgrade and, at times, diversify his or her inventory.

To secure *work*, that inventory needs to be marketed and sold. At times it may be sold on a contract basis. For a time, it may be sold under a traditional employment arrangement, *i.e., a job*. It may be invested in one's own business venture, as an entrepreneur producing goods and/or services for sale, possibly even creating *work* for other people.

It is important to understand that all *work* arrangements will likely be temporary. Over the course of their working life, individuals must be prepared to sell their inventory to many different customers.

The Skills Center in Northern California[5] provides employment services to people with disabilities. They acknowledge that their consumers, just like the rest of the workforce, will be leaving jobs frequently throughout their working lives. To make sure that bridges aren't burned, one of the Skill Center's employment preparation classes deals with the *right and wrong ways to quit a job*. In line with the new realities of work, they no longer focus on "placing" people with disabilities; but according to CEO John Christensen, on "minimizing their periods of unemployment."

Customers not *Employers*

In this new world of *work*, it is *customers* not *employers* that will be sought. There will be a shift away from "Where can I find a job?" to "Where can I find a customer?" An employer will just be a different kind of customer who has *work* to be done.

Old organizational paradigms encouraged employees to view themselves as the occupants of a box called *a job*. The current work structures, and those of the future, demand each worker (whether employee, subcontractor, or independent contractor) to adopt a strategy of customer service to a company. Alluding to this, Bridges (1994, p.63) asserts, "Anyone seeking to work for an organization (as an external vendor or as an employee) must either learn to view the organization as a marketplace or else lose the organization's business to someone else who does."

Work *Packages*

We are already witnessing a profusion of new ways that *work* is being packaged/distributed. In the future we are likely to encounter a proliferation of many more. They are so mercurial, that they are very difficult to accurately compartmentalize. Nevertheless, the following are some of the predominant modes that work packages are likely to be coming in.

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[5]Skills Center, Inc., 2685 Mattison Lane, Santa Cruz, CA 95062, phone (408) 761-7068.

Regular Employment–Working for Others

For at least portions of their working lives, many people will likely find themselves on the payroll of a company that engages them to fill a position for an indeterminate number of years. This is the closest thing that we will probably see to the model of the "traditional job." The important distinction when talking about employment is the word "regular." It used to be "permanent." With few exceptions, permanent employment is likely to be a thing of the past. There will be a recognized temporary nature in every working relationship. As explained by Bridges (Batstone, 1999, p. 120), "People who are employed in what they think of as full-time, long-term jobs are in reality hired by their organization to work as long as they offer value. So these are actually temporary jobs."

It is also likely that there will be a growing number of regular part-time jobs–particularly where work is in response to a demand for service or products lasting less than an 8-hour period (such as heavy traffic times at restaurants). Part-time regular employment will also continue to increase as a means for employers to reduce the expense of benefits that are payable to full-time employees. For people who prefer part-time employment, companies will likely be more flexible and prepared to accommodate arrangements, such as work-sharing, where two people share what would otherwise be a full-time job.

Temporary Employment–Working for Staffing Companies

Full- or part-time employment through temporary employment agencies shows no signs of letting up as a growing mode for the distribution of work in this country. In the United States, use of temporary labor has grown 400 percent since 1982 (Tapscott, 1999).

Many large companies, particularly those with workforces plagued with high turnover or those with volatile workforce needs (i.e., recurring short-term manufacturing projects), find it highly beneficial to use the services of temporary employment agencies.

Project HIRED in Santa Clara, California, provides employment services to people with disabilities. For over 10 years it has run its temporary staffing division, HIRE TEMPS, to secure temporary employment for people with disabilities (www.projecthired.org).

Further, as these agencies have developed and proven their expertise in various dimensions of human resources management (i.e., recruiting, payroll, benefits administration), many companies are also readily contracting out all but their "core" jobs to them. In concert with this, they are redefining themselves as "staffing" agencies rather than simply "temporary employment" agencies.

As this is evolving, these agencies are truly becoming agents for their employees. Since they make their money from commissions made on their employees, it is in their best interest to keep good employees steadily employed (likely on a series of assignments), with good benefits (so they don't leave) and with opportunities to increase their skills (leading to better assignments, higher pay), resulting in higher commissions.

Self-Employment–Working for Yourself

Self-employment is rapidly increasing as a means of livelihood. The Small Business Administration reports that 1.5 million new businesses start each year and first-time entrepreneurs make up 60 percent of the total number of small businesses. Related to this, franchises represent a growing segment of work opportunity. From 1980 to 1997, franchise revenues increased from $335 billion to $750 billion annually–with a success rate, measured over 10 years, of 95 percent (Migdol, 1999, p. 58).

Sonoma County in California has over 10,000 residents working in home-based businesses. To support this part of its economy, the Sonoma County Economic Development Board started a public/private partnership called Home Team. Home Team's action plan includes revising zone ordinances, holding seminars, publishing a health insurance guide, and developing a directory of home-based businesses. Source: *Home Business Magazine*, February, 1999.

Broadly speaking, self-employment can be segmented into two broad categories–"entrepreneurship" and "soloing." The distinction is somewhat arbitrary, but, in essence, entrepreneurs focus on growing their businesses and employing more people, while soloists purposefully limit their business to the goods and services they can produce themselves.

Sometimes self-employed entrepreneurs are able to secure enough capital to start large companies overnight. More typically, they grow from more humble beginnings–many of them from home-based operations. No matter how humble their beginnings, however, success awaits the right person with the right product and talent. These are only some well-known companies that had their beginnings as home-based businesses: Dell Computer Corporation, Hewlett-Packard, Apple Computer Inc., Microsoft, Amway, Mrs. Fields Original Cookies.

Soloing is a rapidly-growing phenomenon, particularly among knowledge workers. It is a particularly good option for individuals with a valued and specific skill set. Essentially, these individuals can truly operate as their own one-person business. "Freelancers" is another term that has been applied to this phenomenon. These individuals sell their skills and talents to a variety of customers. Soloists, are particularly likely to enter into "contracted" employment arrangements–whereby their services are purchased for a set term or project. Soloists frequently balance several different contracts at the same time. Sometimes soloists collaborate with one another on projects or even formally associate as "talent pools."

The Home-Based Business Promotion Act in New Jersey is intended to remove some existing barriers to home-based businesses. According to the Home-Based Business Council, entrepreneurs in New Jersey start 6000 home-based businesses each month. These businesses can be found in 40 percent of the state's households and they contribute $15 billion annually to the state's economy. Source: *Home Office*, February 1999, p. 12.

The huge growth in self-employment, particularly home-based employment, is also generating a whole new realm of work opportunities around it. There are new opportunities for others to be agents or brokers for the skills of these soloists. There are evolving opportunities for

businesses to deliver the goods and services needed to support these home businesses: home office furnishings, office supplies, delivery and packaging services, printing services, financial services, technical support, and many more.

In 1998, the Institute on Rehabilitation Issues published *People with Disabilities Developing Self-Employment and Small Business Opportunities*–an excellent document on self-employment and the opportunities available to people with disabilities.

The President's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities has established a project, Small Business and Self-employment for People With Disabilities, to compile information on resources available throughout the country (www.pcepd.gov).

Workplaces

Just as *work* is no longer being doled out in neat *job* packages, it is also not being neatly tied to traditional geographic workplaces. This phenomenon has important implications for work-seekers with disabilities and rehabilitation professionals.

Many people who are self-employed are choosing to work from home. Also, many companies are allowing their employees to work entirely or partially from home offices. According to *Home Business Magazine* (1999, p. 10), "One out of three people currently operate a home-based business or work from home for another company." According to the Small Business Administration (1998), it is forecast that one out of two people will work from home by the year 2000.

In his remarks on Education on January 7, 1999, President Clinton stated, "We now have an economy in which the workplace is no longer . . . bound by the hours of 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.; and the workplace is increasingly at home. When I became President six years ago, only 3 million Americans were earning their living at home. When I ran for reelection, the number was 12 million. Today there are about 20 million Americans earning their primary income out of their homes. This is a stunning statistic."

Since 1991, the staff at the National Telecommuting Institute, Inc. (NTI) in Boston have been enabling people with disabilities to be successful members of the "virtual workforce."

As the reformulation of *work* continues to evolve in North America, most people will have to forge their livelihoods through a combination of several of these modes of work. Identifying the opportunities within these "new" configurations and determining how to best take advantage of them will be the challenge facing the future worker–and how to do so in order to meet their employment goals will be the challenge for the rehabilitation professional. Fortunately, specific skill sets can be developed to increase the chances of doing so successfully.

Skills and Capabilities Needed for Success at Alternative Work Opportunities

For most people with disabilities, the goal will be to establish long term employment stability (again, not necessarily a long-term *job* with a single employer but constant compensated *work* over a period of years). For individuals to achieve this work goal, it becomes essential that they be able to identify work opportunities. Development of these work opportunities is attained through an understanding of the following principles that include such concepts as:

- Developing the notion of **dynamic work opportunities** or entrepreneur livelihood–identifying and finding the *work* that needs to be done;
- Embracing the philosophy of **lifelong learning**;
- **Continuously renewing yourself**, one-to-one self-marketing, knowing who your customers are (employers, bosses, supervisors, colleagues, co-workers) and customizing your skills to meet their needs;
- Learning, understanding, and developing **team skills** for participating in team approaches, team work, and team building–in many situations this may include the concept of multi-tasking skills;
- Building, honing, and fine-tuning **technological skills**, including the proficient use of any adaptive technology devices;
- Possessing or accessing **communication skills**;
- Developing or accessing the skills and abilities for **information gathering and networking**; and
- Identifying, learning, or accessing **fiscal or financial survival skills.**

What is meant by these concepts as they relate to a VR consumer?

- **Dynamic work opportunities**. This concept involves the skills and capacities to survive in the workplaces described earlier. It incorporates the requirements for innovativeness, creativity, flexibility and adaptability. "The constant pursuit of improving quality in all products and services will require (workers) to be more innovative, creative and flexible" (National Board of Employment, Education & Training, 1994). For the VR counselor this may include such work development activities as job carving,[6] supported work, entrepreneurship/self-employment and multiple part-time work opportunities (work

[6]Job carving is the "process of breaking down jobs into their key components and re-assigning those pieces in more efficient or understandable ways. . . . identifying specific tasks that could be assigned to employees with disabilities who have a proficiency for these tasks and who want to perform these jobs" (Griffin, 1999, p. 8).

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"packages" such as contract, on-call, short-term or leased work), but it also demands the development of client skills in problem solving.

- **Lifelong learning**. Though this term has become more common in recent years, its implications for the VR system are embraced in the Congressional language of the 1992 Amendments to the Rehabilitation Act that focused on career enhancing services. The need for continuous learning is most readily identified with the speed-of-light advancements in technology and technology-based industries, and it is almost impossible today to find work situations that do not require a commitment to lifelong learning. Teachers and professors once needed only to present themselves in front of a classroom and talk about their subject matter with, perhaps, the use of a chalkboard. Now distance learning, audio-visual materials, CD-based resources, and Internet linkages require different skills. Where auto mechanics once needed to know what a malfunctioning piston sounded like and how to fix it, they now must know how to connect a computer to the engine and decipher the print-out of the diagnosis.

- **Continuously renewing yourself**. This concept incorporates the idea of evaluating who are the VR consumer's "customers," what are those customer's needs, and how consumers can best modify their skills/services to meet those needs. In situations where the consumer's *work* is being performed in a full-time *job* within an agency, company, or business, the customers may very well be the supervisor, boss, owner, and/or colleagues. Peppers, Rogers, and Dorf (1999) present the concept of individualizing a business' marketing strategies. Incumbent in this marketing strategy is the need for a business to know as much as possible about its customers and their needs. With the knowledge of what its customers want, a business can modify or add products or services to meet their needs. It is this same theory that is encapsulated in the concept of continuous self-renewal–VR consumers must continuously evaluate, up-date, modify, and fine-tune their skills and knowledge base in order to meet current and future *work* needs. For the VR counselor, this concept focuses on developing or embracing assessment tools that assist consumers to explore personal interests and talents in a manner that allows for continuous renewal and may require radically different training approaches, such as training for temperament[7] not jobs (Research Agenda, 1998). This also requires, if not demands, as well, that the VR counselor and consumer concentrate on the development, strengthening, and enhancement of self-advocacy skills for the consumer.

- **Team skills**. Increasingly, even when consumers are employed full-time in assembly-line-type position, they will be expected to participate in team work situations for a variety of reasons that may range from teams for quality assurance, efficiency evaluation, collective bargaining, to holiday party organizing.

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[7] Employers will increasingly look for capabilities and temperaments that are transferrable across all job environments rather than being task specific. Desired temperaments are those listed above that lead to an individual becoming one who problem solves, communicates effectively, is a learner, is flexible, and socially skilled. Training for these outcomes will look nothing like the traditional task oriented approaches of the past (D. A. Rosenthal, personal communication, January 20, 2000). This concept is not unlike Gardner's theory (1993) of multiple intelligences and its increasing impact on how teaching and educational objective have been redefined.

- **Technological skills**. It is easy to harangue about the technological needs for so many types of *work* as well as needing these skills to simply be able to make full use of the life resources now available. However, the pervasive spread of technology requirements into what has been historically regarded as "low skill" work may very well bring the VR counselor and consumer up short. Fast food burger flippers may also need to operate microwave ovens, automated fryers, and sophisticated drink and coffee dispensers and be expected to re-stock, re-fill, or restart these machines. They may need to know how to use computer-assisted inventory systems, alarm systems, and cooling/heating systems. The auto mechanic, as stated above, now must use computer diagnostic systems and if they lock up, may need to know how to reboot the computer and restart the program. Technology skills will be needed, as well, for seeking work, maintaining work, or enhancing one's work opportunities. For many VR consumers, this concept also means the proficient use of adaptive technology devices, such as refreshable braille, computer speech access, computerized note takers, or large print computer access.

- **Communication skills**. This concept includes, of course, the skills and capacities that incorporate creative writing, imagination, active listening, and conversation skills. It is also meant to include the ability to listen and react to customer needs (again, whoever the customer may be: boss, colleague, buyer) in a way that is effective and responsive.

- **Skills in gathering information and networking**. There is the usual understanding of the need for networking–knowing who important players are in any situation, keeping in touch with colleagues or potential colleagues, listening for trends in a particular line of work. Other survival skills are incorporated into this category–skills in finding and doing work in a world without clear-cut and stable jobs, the ability to forget about job descriptions, and look for work that needs doing. Also needed are skills in identifying and managing resources such as mentors, coaches, support groups, and alliances, and how to maintain flexibility in collaborating with these resources.

> In a marketplace that constantly asks, "What have you done for me lately?" the worker who survives is constantly asking, "What is the problem to which I am the solution?"

- **Fiscal or financial survival skills**. In so many of the marketplaces described earlier, self-management skills are mandatory and these, of course, include fiscal self-management. If the optimal work situation becomes on-call or temporary work "packages," budgeting, financial, and investing skills must be highly developed or accessed in some manner. As with previous concepts, if the assessment made by the VR counselor determines that the disability interferes with a consumer's ability to successfully develop these skills, then support mechanisms must be put into place to allow the consumer access to these skills. While many traditional fiscal support mechanisms, (e.g., families, friends, group homes) may still be viable in the marketplace of the future, even they will need to learn flexibility, innovation, and creativity to deal with the fluid situations facing them. Individuals who encounter self-employment, on-

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call, contract, or other situations other than a long-term, full-time, single job with benefits must evaluate their long-term financial needs in order to determine the impact of their work status. For many this may mean cyclical periods of income (boom-and-bust) where significant amounts of income must be put aside for future use. Obviously, the development of these fiscal or financial planning skills or access to them has a significant impact on the future need for intervention by VR or other agencies.

It is expected that these principles will apply to some degree to nearly all types of *work*. The list above represents an amalgam of the various workforce requirements presented by the various resources listed in this document. Through the incorporation of these principles into their work-seeking, workers of the future will survive the rough-and-tumble of the marketplace.

It should be obvious that not all the skills and capabilities encompassed by the preceding principles can be developed by all individuals with disabilities that are served by the VR system. This does not lessen the need for these skills or capabilities for these individuals to maintain long-term employment. The task then becomes the identification and development of an individual's access to these requirements through either assistive technology or supportive individuals, families, groups, or situations.

The Certainty of Change

How dramatically everything is changing! We are on the threshold of a world where many jobs will no longer be tied to locations, and a great deal of available work will not be tied to jobs. The structures and strategies that used to guide us on the path to making a living are mutating into something new. For income seekers and for counselors, the old "tool kits" are rapidly becoming outmoded.

Seeking jobs in the new world of work may be akin to seeking buffalo on the plains of North America. They used to be plentiful, but things have changed. There was a time when a family in North America could survive by bagging one or two buffalo each year. Once the buffalo disappeared, families had to learn how to hunt quail, snare rabbits and catch fish–continually. Similarly, as those "big" (full-time, long-term) jobs become increasingly rare, we will all have to learn to replace them by continually securing and combining a larger number of "smaller" work opportunities.

The emerging task of the rehabilitation professional will be to enable people with disabilities to successfully secure these same opportunities. Again, in the words of Bridges (Batstone, 1999), "People have to shift their focus from finding a job to finding work. We have to help them look for the work that needs doing."

Key Points

- There is an important distinction between *work* and *a job*. *Work* is an activity, whereas *a job* is a status. *Work* is something we do; *a job* is something that is done with us.

- It is necessary for workers of the twenty-first century to cultivate a new mindset. In a workplace where people are hired by an organization to work as long as they offer value, everyone actually has a temporary *job*. Accordingly, the challenge of the changing world of work is not only to find remunerative *work* but also to sustain it.

- For many, a variety of alternative *work* opportunities will be the future form of livelihood.

- To compete successfully in this world of work, workers will need to develop adaptive skills and capabilities.

Chapter III

The New Environment: Challenges in a Time of Change

The New Environment: Challenges in a Time of Change

Abstract

The dynamic state of the national economy and changes in how business does business present challenges to vocational rehabilitation—its systems, practitioners, and participants. Vocational rehabilitation has an important role to play in this new economic environment, but to be a successful player and ensure employment outcomes for persons with disabilities, self-examination is necessary as it defines this new role.

This chapter identifies the major skills and practices vocational rehabilitation counselors will employ to serve consumers and suggests that they will have to modify their interactions with consumers, peers, and employers to take advantage of the trends occurring in the employment market. It examines the rehabilitation system in a time of increased competition and need for expanded collaboration. It also considers the ways in which change impacts consumers, employers and other community partners and how these entities relate to one another.

Challenges for the Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor

In response to the question, "What are the major strengths of today's VR counselor?" D. A. Rosenthal (personal communication, June 8, 1999) stated "VR counselors are in a unique position in their understanding of the interaction of disability and work." He added that they are "also very proficient in communication and people skills." Leahy (1999), building on that foundation, notes:

> Most rehabilitation counselors: (a) assess client needs, (b) work with the client to develop goals and individualized plans to meet identified needs, and (c) provide or arrange therapeutic services and interventions (e.g., psychological, medical, social, behavioral) needed by the client, including job placement and follow-up services. (p. 32).

The VR counselors of today must see the future "as a challenge that includes expansion of [their] traditional role and function" (Jenkins & Strauser, 1999). Along with consumers, they will have to consider those skills that need to be enhanced, adjusted, or otherwise modified if they are to meet the challenges created by the changes to the new work environment. Roles, responsibilities, and relationships are changing in the following areas and/or for the following reasons.

Technology

The most obvious challenge as we enter the twenty-first century is the area of technology. Information has always been a powerful tool for clearly defining strengths and assessing limitations,

as well as providing the foundation for substantive counseling and career development. New technologies will provide more rapid access to such information, and it will be essential for counselors to know how to keep abreast of and access this information. More importantly, it will become increasingly important to learn to manage sometimes overwhelming amounts of such information.

Technology has also made vocational options once considered unattainable a reality for some individuals with disabilities. Information about changes in the work environment, the technology available for modifications to work stations, telecommuting opportunities, establishing a small business enterprise, and the skills it takes for entrepreneurship–all of this information, and more, is available to the counselor at the push of a button.

Most certainly, as we have already begun to see, technology can literally provide reams of information about employment opportunities with almost instant contact to employers. Because information changes at such a rapid pace, it is critical that counselors remain up to date about employment trends, what skills employers are seeking, and that they secure the most recent information about where the jobs are and where they will be in the future. It is also essential that a counselor can determine how to best access this information and make it available to consumers in the most meaningful and effective way.

Flexible Workforce

Emerging workforce trends and technological change will affect segments of the socioeconomic continuum differently. People who have abundant resources available to them will be able to participate in change with the least effort. Those without resources will experience greater difficulty and perhaps be placed at a distinct disadvantage in their efforts to gain meaningful employment. It becomes the role of the counselor to understand what is needed and provide the essential tools for successful employment outcomes.

With the increased demand for a flexible workforce that includes increased numbers of temporary and on-call workers, individuals seeking employment without reliable transportation resources or the availability of transportation at all will not be able to participate in this new workforce. Getting people from urban and rural areas to suburban areas, which is where increasingly the available jobs are, requires thinking differently about transportation issues. The VR counselor will be required to oversee these kinds of decisions and participate in increased advocacy on behalf of those they serve. In some instances, trends may work to the favor of VR consumers (e.g., telecommuting can benefit consumers who either have transportation concerns or are homebound) and the counselor will need to seek additional avenues to effectively deliver this type of service. Regardless of the direction of change in workforce practices, understanding and responding to system change will become an increasingly important role of the counselor.

The VR counselor most often works with people with limited resources and will require creativity and innovation in the design of services to minimize the gap of "opportunity" that presents with the changing workforce.

Employers' demand for a more flexible workforce will likely promote job instability. VR counselors will have to do the following:

- Prepare individuals emotionally for constant employment change;
- Stress the importance of acquiring and maintaining workplace know-how skills;
- Focus on consumers learning "transferrable skills" that they can take with them to the next job(s);
- Think in terms of job carving/job restructuring;
- Promote entrepreneurial thinking for consumers–self-employment, independent contracting, and the skills and abilities that fit with the demands of a high performance workplace; and
- Become as flexible as the employers with whom they partner.

Staffing Agencies and Temporary Workers

The trend toward increasing numbers of temporary workers will require that VR counselors re-examine the benefits of temporary employment. The word "temporary" may be misleading in that an ever-increasing portion of full-time regular workers for large and small companies are being recruited through staffing agencies. Temporary work assignments also provide the opportunity to work in a number of different environments before selecting one that is consistent with a person's ability and interests. Consumers will benefit when counselors develop relationships with and learn the language of these placement organizations for the benefit of the consumers they serve.

The University of Iowa study (1998), examining how Manpower, Inc., employs people with disabilities, concluded "it's clear that the staffing industry can be a major player for people with disabilities to find good jobs . . . ."

- 90 percent of those studied were at work within 10 days of applying to Manpower.
- 90 percent were placed in industries/jobs that they wanted and matched their skills.
- 90 percent of those studied remained in the workforce throughout the course of the study, either in regular jobs or a series of temporary positions.
- 60 percent of the employees with disabilities, as a result of their temporary employment, moved from no employment to regular employment. (About 40% of Manpower's workforce makes that move annually.)

Assessment

In the new environment, assessment needs to be the process of understanding the consumer to determine the level of treatment and how directive/nondirective the counselor will be–with continued attention to (a) determining vocational strengths and needs; (b) taking into consideration the consumer's skills, abilities, and interests; (c) career assessment/exploration; (d) job matching; and (e) job accommodations.

As a result of the counselor's understanding the relationship between interests/aspirations and competencies, the consumer should be able to (a) make a higher level of informed choice in determining the compatibility of occupations and the assistance/training needed, and (b) gain higher level job acquisition and retention skills. The greater the counselor's understanding and skill in the use of assessment information, the greater also will be the level of consumer self-awareness, empowerment, informed decision making, and optimal vocational outcomes (T. A. Modahl, personal communication, June 24, 1999).

Counseling

Counseling must further the empowering process for the consumer. ("Empowering processes are those in which people create or are given opportunities to control their own destiny and influence the decisions that affect their lives.") In the new environment, this means ". . . the working alliance is viewed as a collaborative effort in which the counselor and consumer make equal contributions to the counseling relationship. It reflects a belief that the consumer can participate in the counseling process based on a sense of ownership" and that a "strengthened working alliance between the counselor and the consumer will result in more positive rehabilitation outcomes and higher levels of consumer satisfaction" (Kosciulek, 1999, p. 7). It further points to the need for:

- Increased consumer input and participation in the decision making process of rehabilitation, allowing the individual to be more self-directed in the rehabilitation process and the counselor to be less directive than in the past;
- Planning that is person-centered;
- Making certain that consumers understand that if they are to successfully work within a business they have to accept that the companies of today are in a state of constant change, requiring workers to be flexible in their abilities to do the work and in ways to serve the company's needs and processes;
- Enforcing the reality that workers will be, and are today, faced with an unstable work path;
- Proactive processes that allow the consumer to become independent, not just by attaining work, but rather through development of thought and action processes that will sustain work;
- A consultative approach to the consumer–consulting with the person before making recommendations that will affect the life of that person;

- An emphasis on career development/planning based on emerging labor market information and directed to employment outcomes;
- Communication focusing on active listening and dialogue;
- Spaces for consumer's dreams and aspirations for their lives and work;
- Building around the concepts of quality of life and informed choice;
- Providing services that meet the perceived needs and expectations of the consumer; and
- Developing goals of counseling around the consumer's ability to
  - develop self-marketing skills
  - make informed choices/decisions
  - explore/understand the implications of his/her choices
  - have a thorough understanding of the steps needed to achieve specific goals
  - engage in self-advocacy
  - accept, foster, and tolerate change
  - be knowledgeable about job markets and job demands
  - be outcome/results oriented

Seeing the Big Picture

In the new environment, counselors will need to (a) broaden their emphasis in the "move toward 'career' and away from 'closure' (one person/one job/one point in time)" to improve post-employment outcomes for consumers (Rumrill, Jr. & Roessler, 1999, p. 29) and (b) "supplement their clinical skills with organizational competencies . . . process management; systems analysis; written and verbal presentation skills; organizational change strategies; and negotiation, mediation, and conflict resolution" to effectively partner with business (Rosenthal & Olsheski, 1999, p. 34).

Rumrill, Jr. and Roessler (1999) also indicate that

> When assessing labor market demands and trends, it will no longer be sufficient to simply identify the occupational fields in which vacancies are expected to occur. It is necessary to look at the labor market indicators pointing to where growth and opportunities exist and also to those occupations/industries that are diminishing. . . VR counselors will have to move beyond the structure of any rehabilitation service delivery systems which are not able to respond quickly to the demands of the changing workplace. Often counselors are constrained in the type of services they can provide and by procedures limiting their ability to respond quickly to employers' requests. (p. 29)

Working Differently

In Chapter II the focus is on the consumer's need to be flexible in the new environment in terms of how and where work is done. Georgia felt the same to be true for its VR counselors and moved them out of the office (NRAA Newsletter, 1999)

Virtual Office–A Georgia Perspective

The *Virtual Office Approach* as implemented in Georgia, is an innovative approach which provides service delivery staff the opportunity to perform their official duties away from the traditional office site. Other locations, which may include an employee's home, library, school, automobile or even a booth in a fast foods restaurant, often become the temporary work place.

A typical vocational rehabilitation counselor's schedule is to attend a mandatory Monday team meeting in which cases are staffed, clients are matched with employment possibilities as presented, and needs for current clients are identified. Assignments are given to different team members who support the counselor's efforts to meet the client's needs, as everyone is ultimately responsible for placement of the client in the most appropriate job setting.

The rest of the week may consist of visiting the clients in their homes, work places, schools or meeting with employers or referral sources in the assigned geographical areas. The idea is to place emphasis in the assigned community in order for staff to "know" the client's neighborhood, resources, barriers and other helpful information. This provides the offering of more informed and practical options to clients when decisions are being made. The counselor has the choice of completing paperwork and other "desk work" at alternate locations or at the rehabilitation office.

Virtual staff are provided laptop computers, printers, modems to access e-mail, phone cards and pagers. (p. 2)

Self-Employment/Entrepreneurship

It is not the purpose of this document to convince the VR counselor that every VR consumer needs to be self-employed or a business owner. For many consumers, self-employment or business ownership is not a viable vocational goal. This does not lessen the need to focus on the concepts of self-employment. That focus, it is believed, is the crux of successful job placements of the future. The measure of a VR counselor's ability to identify, train to, provide accommodation for, or gather support for the skills and concepts of self-employment for a VR consumer will be critical to successful vocational rehabilitation in the beginning of the new century.

VR counselors are often not aware, on the whole, of economic development resources, business start-up methods, or entrepreneurial characteristics and requirements. Developing a new business requires sound planning, implementing, and monitoring. The entrepreneurial client will need advice and assistance from more than the traditional channels of assistance used within traditional employment scenarios/models.

It is important for the consumer and counselor to have connections within the community with business technical service providers. The concepts of team counseling or co-counseling should be considered, requiring the counselor to become knowledgeable about available resources and be willing to and able to network on behalf of the consumer's interests. Consumer assistance in the decision-making process of business ownership has to be based on informed choice. The consumer will need a strong support team of family, friends, associates, and professional service providers. The counselor and consumer need to be able to work in collaboration through the assessment process and feasibility study and both have to be informed about work strategies such as independent contracting, subcontracting, and outsourcing. Through collaboration with business-minded associates, new solutions can be effectively explored. A team of professional business advisors, such as a lawyer, accountant, and banker, needs to be established to assist the process. Resources that would be allocated to train or assist the individual in job attainment need to be allocated instead to assisting the potential new business owner to succeed.

Many, if not most, VR agencies require the development of a business plan, often with Small Business Administration involvement, if the vocational goal is business ownership. It is currently possible for VR agencies to use financial resources in a flexible manner based on the needs identified in a business plan developed within the structure or framework of an Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE).

Often people acquire a project through outsourcing or freelancing and come to self-employment as a result of work opportunity rather than by conscious decision-making processes. This activity needs support by their advocacy team as well. The consumer needs to understand not only work management but also financial management of the income and associated expenses. The development of business management skills and abilities such as cash flow management and budgeting becomes important to self-employment survival.

Often the concept of business ownership seems to be discounted by the professional VR counselor. The perception is that the risk factor is too great and the return to investment too low. However, in the changing marketplace of work these arguments can be used to discuss any work scenario. What is important and valuable is the process the counselor employs to assist the consumer through the evaluation of the idea and the help sources utilized through feasibility determination.

Collaboration/Mediation

The Twenty-First IRI, *Operationalizing Consumer Decision Making and Choice in the VR Process* (1995), notes that the ability to collaborate is a must for the counselor to be effective in serving consumers, partnering with employers, and working with other community organizations. Related to these is the counselor's skill in mediation, whether playing the role of mediator between consumer and employer, or consumer and educator, or even between consumer and the VR agency when concerns arise regarding policy issues. The counselor's role is to facilitate a dialogue in which parties can clarify issues, work out differences, and achieve desired goals.

Diversity of Populations Served

As the populations served by vocational rehabilitation change, so too must VR counselors modify their working relationships with consumers. Mason (1999) reinforces the need for VR counselors to pay attention to the fact that:

> As America enters the twenty-first century it will be much more culturally, racially and linguistically diverse. One consequence will be that health and human services agencies will be called upon to provide services to a much different set of consumers and communities . . . [and] wrestle with the concept of culture as an issue in providing services.
>
> Cultural competence is a relatively new concept and . . . professionals need to distinguish this concept from the earlier models of cultural awareness and sensitivity. These earlier models can be viewed as cognitive-based. Cultural competence goes one step further by including a behavioral dimension . . . . Many professionals understand the general issues faced by people with disabilities in vocational rehabilitation systems, but this awareness wanes when considering it in the context of African-, Asian-, Latino-, or Native-American culture; . . . . having cross cultural knowledge is an important aspect of cultural competence. It is important that counselors take "periodic steps to: examine their strengths and weaknesses with the diverse communities they serve [and] consider the extent to which they view culture as a factor in the helping process" (p. 61).

In addition, Leahy (1999) reminds us that VR counselors have already seen their caseloads change because

> . . . the populations served by rehabilitation counselors has . . . evolved over time in response to medical and technological advances, legislative mandates, and changes in public policy. In today's service delivery environments, rehabilitation counselors not only serve individuals with physical disabilities, but those with severe developmental, cognitive, emotional and addiction disabilities, among others . . . . These changes have had a direct effect on the type and level of knowledge and skills required to effectively provide services to these populations . . . . (p. 32)

Vocational rehabilitation counselors will also be working with populations that are increasingly diverse in terms of age and gender. These include:

- Young consumers who have a different approach and attitude towards work and the world of work. Some youth will have never been a member of the workforce and many will have benefitted from mainstreaming in the schools.

- Older consumers–those who are aging with long-term disabilities and those who are aging into disability for the first time in later life–will constitute approximately one-third of the nation by 2000. They may require updating of work skills and overcoming social isolation/lack of social support, present significant health issues, and face age discrimination.

- Women, who will require a need for more flexibility in work scheduling and more employee benefits/supportive services that allow individuals to better balance the demands of family and employment.

Two other factors must be considered: (a) The emerging workforce will be more culturally diverse in terms of the workplace in which consumers will work, and they must be prepared for this change; and (b) VR counselors will also be working with increasingly more diverse individuals as business and community partners.

Informed Choice

The issue of informed choice could fill an entire document or be a stand-alone chapter to do justice to the importance of and necessity for informed choice. Let it be noted that the authors strongly feel it to be a significant thread woven throughout this document, recommending that the following statements contribute to a continuing dialogue on the process.

Informed choice is critical in the discussion of the future workforce and work-place. The issues are how to (a) transfer choice into the new workforce paradigm, (b) then transfer all of that into the services VR delivers, and (c) balance informed choice with meeting the needs of workforce development.

> The Michigan Rehabilitation Services and United Cerebral Palsy Association of Detroit developed a joint program, the Rehabilitation Renaissance Project, intended to transfer control and authority in the VR process to consumers with disabilities through empowerment training and person-centered planning (Callahan & Skiba, 1997). The project was designed intentionally to address the following criticisms of the VR process: (a) consumers with disabilities are not empowered; (b) consumers do not have a true choice in their rehabilitation plans; (c) the professional brings all the answers to the rehabilitation equation; and (d) the professional is responsible for whatever happens to the consumer. . . . the project has as its primary values and practices: (a) consumer choice, empowerment, and responsibility; (b) a focus on consumer strengths; and (c) consumer "expertise" on her or his rehabilitation needs (Kosciulek, 1999, pp. 6-7).

> Kosciulek (1999) also states:

> The ability of consumers with disabilities to control and direct the delivery of services . . . [is] the amount of control consumers have over how, when, and by who services are delivered. It also focuses on the extent to which individuals with disabilities determine the type and influence the quality of services received (Kosciulek, 1997; NICDLTS, 1996).

> The variety and type of service delivery options available to consumers with disabilities . . . [is] the issue of whether consumers have a choice from a range of viable rehabilitation service options. For example, in . . . employment . . . consumers with developmental disabilities have not been given a range of service options.

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Traditionally, the range has been from a single option to a few constricted options (Taylor, Biklen, & Knoll, 1989; West & Parent, 1992).

An informed consumer is the best authority on what his or her service needs are, how these needs are best met, and whether these needs are being met appropriately. The consumer should be presumed competent to direct services and make choices, regardless of age, or the nature or extent of disability (NICDLTS, 1996). (pp. 3-4)

Challenges for Relationships With Employers

It has become important for counselors to know that the fundamental structure of the workplace is changing and that these changes have far reaching implications for employment in the future as well as for the vocational rehabilitation system. The implications of workplace changes, how they will affect persons with disabilities, and ensure that consumers also develop the skills to effectively participate in the workforce of the future must be understood and addressed by the counselor. Essential in this process is partnering with business requiring that the counselor

- View the employment process from the perspective of a business model rather than that of a human services model.
- Grab the attention of human resources and business professionals in establishing VR as a recruitment resource and then market that capability.
- Take seriously the need for the development of partnerships with business, interfacing with employers to identify the new workforce needs and skills–not just to benefit VR but because VR has essential and valuable resources to bring to business.
- Become conversant in the language of business, which is critical (a) as communication increasingly moves outside of VR and into the business community and (b) in expressing the benefits derived from VR services.
- Form strong communication links with employers.
- Understand the benefits that result from shared language.
- Think in terms of marketing the job ready consumer. (What does the consumer bring of value to the company?)
- Access the hidden job market.
- Be comfortable with and competent in the use of technology.
- Understand that credibility is the key element in sustaining positive working relationships

with the business community. Oftentimes the complexity of the VR structure and the demands placed on the VR counselor do not necessarily lead to high confidence levels regarding credibility. Nevertheless, this only identifies one more area where heightened attention is warranted in meeting the future demands of the profession.

New Models and Approaches

Most people will change jobs five to seven times during their careers and be asked to upgrade their job skills on a continuing basis. In such an environment, the employment, training, and education programs must be adapted to the demands of the labor market as defined by the business sector, thereby meeting the needs of employers and employees.

The job market now and into the foreseeable future is one in which the most important resources workers possess are their workplace know-how skills and their ability to learn new skills.

Jenkins & Strauser (1999) note that if the "focus [is] on one individual and one job . . . the rehabilitation counselor or placement specialist only has contact with the employer regarding the placement of a specific individual . . ." which the authors see as limited and inadequate, failing to "meet the needs of employers or rehabilitation counselors in today's economic environment and in future years." They go on to say that rehabilitation professionals will be called upon to

> . . . develop a consultative approach and to assist employers in meeting human resource needs . . . because of the economic trends . . . employers are going to be looking for consultants who provide comprehensive services and are knowledgeable about work design, staffing issues, disability, workers' compensation, and organizational design . . . providing a value-added service to the company. (p. 6)

They find that "many times rehabilitation professionals are unaware or unconcerned with the employer's needs . . . [and] must possess an understanding of the company and how work is done within the company." (p. 6)

What Does VR Offer to the Employer?

VR has to learn how to express what is done for its business customers in terms of the benefits that are derived from the services provided. If consideration is to be given to the VR community as a recruitment resource, it is the benefits of the service, rather than any specific feature of the services that will grab the attention of the human resource and business professionals. In an environment where there is increased competition for a finite set of jobs, the better the benefits can be communicated, the greater the likelihood of continued communication.

In meeting the needs of the employment community in the future, the VR profession needs to offer solutions, and the most successful way to do so is to communicate the specific gain or advantage that results from using its services. Listed in Table 4 below are examples of the relationships between features of VR services and the benefits derived from them.

Accessing the Hidden Job Market

The emerging labor market trends suggest revisions to the classic VR job readiness model. In so doing, it is assumed that (a) the labor market will be tight for the foreseeable future, (b) the Internet will play a large role in advertising job openings, and (c) the percentage of significantly and most significantly disabled individuals on VR caseloads will continue to increase.

Table 4
Features and Benefits

Feature	Benefit
On-the job training	Save supervisory time Maintains production Saves money
Public relations	Good public image Increased advertising Enhanced staff relations
Knowledge of worker	Effective job matches Fast start-up time Good production Greater job retention
Assistance with job changes	Maintain productivity and quality over time

Table adapted from "Building Trust Relationships" Gilmore and Associates (1997).

Traditional rehabilitation models emphasize job preparation leading to job readiness, attempting to move rehabilitation consumers as close to the requirements of the labor market as possible. What happens when the rehabilitation system cannot move a consumer close enough to job readiness to effect employment/placement? With legislative mandates to serve individuals with significant and the most significant disabilities, VR agencies must develop strategies that lead to successful outcomes for employers and for persons with disabilities. Meeting the workforce requirements of employers and job seekers in the future will require refinements in the job readiness rehabilitation model. We are suggesting that in order to increase the likelihood of successful employment outcomes for individuals considered significantly and most significantly disabled, VR professionals must establish effective relationships with employers. (The Twenty-Third IRI [1997], *Developing Effective Partnerships with Employers as a Service Delivery Mechanism*, can be helpful here.) It is through these relationships that VR agencies will be in a better position to

- Access the hidden job market where unadvertised job openings exist. In this market, persons with disabilities are *not* competing with the general public.

- Move job qualifications closer to the person with disabilities. When the job readiness model is not effective in helping individuals become job ready, VR professionals must

approach placement from the opposite direction–from the standpoint of job qualifications. Employers are more likely to compromise on job qualifications if other human resource needs are met, such as having employees who are motivated, willing to learn, dependable, and who possess a positive attitude.

The individualized job development strategy works best with the job ready candidate as this candidate is better able to compete in the open job market. VR agencies must have a strategy that maximizes employment possibilities for individuals who cannot compete effectively in the open job market. This latter segment of the VR population will likely increase in proportion to the individuals who can access employment through the open market. The VR agencies' approach to career development and employment must shift accordingly.

Challenges for the Vocational Rehabilitation System

The flexible workforce will certainly place new challenges on the VR system of service delivery, but it will also offer opportunities to innovate as well. A flexible workforce and other workforce trends will permit the evolution of new models of training and employment. Likely these models will include various incentives that may well extend beyond the federal Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC) and state tax credit programs and include alternate methods of expending funds for case service delivery. These models may incorporate a variety of partnerships and agreements with economic development, small business development centers, and entrepreneurial centers. In addition, the characteristics of the flexible workforce will result in complex decision making models against the backdrop of public benefit programs

To keep abreast of the changing world of work, the VR system may be forced into adapting new practices and relinquishing the tried and proved methods of years past. The ability to effect change within the VR program needs to be accelerated greatly to keep pace with the changing workforce. As stated by John F. Welch, Chairman and CEO of General Electric, "If the pace of change within your organization is not keeping pace with the changes outside of your organization, the end is in sight."

The Impact of the Shrinking Labor Pool

A shrinking labor pool has obvious positive implications for the employment of people with disabilities and rehabilitation agencies. Many of the workplace changes designed to enhance the productivity and flexibility of workers in general will make it possible for more people with disabilities to work. The evolution to an information-based economy with its emphasis on intellectual and interpersonal skills rather than physical strength present greater employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities. This is especially true for those who may have been closed out of traditional job markets because of physical requirements. In addition, technology makes it possible for more individuals with disabilities to compete and have access to high-skilled, better paying jobs. Individuals with disabilities who are able to keep up with the changing business environment and have the capacity to thrive among the intellectual and technological demands should prosper as workers.

The downside is that the intense competitive pressures have brought a less forgiving world. Changes in employment patterns and relative wages are harshly felt by those with few skills and the lack of benefits and health care coverage will continue to keep people with disabilities from entering the workforce. In addition, expected increases in part-time employment and other alternative work structures will limit benefit coverage. Resolving the health care dilemma will become even more critical in the future for individuals with disabilities.

Workforce preparation services are critical for individuals with disabilities to compete in the new economy and must include workplace know-how skills and technology training, especially for older workers. Career development strategies will need to accommodate the new workplace as well. The notion that a period of training and education will lead to long-term employment with a single employer must be reconsidered. Rehabilitation activities must emphasize long-term follow-up and support to assist individuals with maintaining employment in an economy characterized by a lack of security and a high rate of uncertainty.

Emerging Strategic Opportunities

The current tight labor market presents opportunities and challenges for the VR agency. The business customer is more receptive to innovative partnerships with public and private workforce development agencies to improve their ability to attract qualified applicants and retain good employees. However, the public rehabilitation system will need to embrace partnerships with business and people with disabilities to increase quality, service, innovation, and customer responsiveness. If vocational rehabilitation wishes to be perceived as the provider of choice for employment services for people with disabilities and businesses with disability concerns, it must examine its current service delivery system to identify its strengths and weaknesses. In addition, vocational rehabilitation must explore ways to redesign services and increase efficiency and effectiveness. The focus of the new economy is to support services that provide the four keys for every customer, whether business or consumer–customization, superior quality, fast response and delivery, and personalized front-line service.

Within the public vocational rehabilitation system, there are certainly many consumers and employers who participate in unique and customized plans of service, receive high quality and timely services, and are satisfied with jobs and employment outcomes achieved through the assistance of front-line rehabilitation personnel. Much good work has been done in the past 75 plus years, but times are rapidly changing and our customers are telling us that they need new and innovative approaches to obtaining employment and filling positions for them.

The emerging strategic opportunities for the public rehabilitation system to address consumer concerns are

- **Employment/placement services**. The vocational rehabilitation system must continue its efforts to work diligently in developing partnerships with business and industry, as well as find new and innovative ways to partner with other organizations and agencies (e.g., Projects With Industry, Workforce Development Boards, and community colleges) as effective strategies to increase employment results and opportunities for consumers. Counselors and consumers must become familiar with the local trends and the

opportunities for employment that these trends create. For example, even when broad trends indicate occupational growth areas, potential opportunities within one's own geographical area must be considered; i.e., an overall national trend of diminishing jobs in a particular occupational field may not hold true for the local job market. Likewise, even if a particular vocational field is expected to remain stagnant or have diminished job growth, issues such as an aging workforce in that occupational field may create considerable employment opportunities.

- **Retaining valued employees**. Employers who put a premium on human resources and who seek to attract and retain highly skilled workers are more likely to work with rehabilitation agencies to accommodate valued employees. The vocational rehabilitation system can assist employers to develop job-relevant hiring practices designed to find and retain the best workers. Efforts must continue to clearly convey this message to business and industry and, in particular, to smaller employers who do not have the resources to support human resource and ADA specialists. The ADA represents a tremendous opportunity to increase participation of people with disabilities in the workforce by facilitating entry and by reinforcing programs to help injured and disabled workers to return to work.

- **Transition services**. Vocational rehabilitation in partnership with schools, community mental health services, school-to-work programs, and other community agencies and employers must continue to work with students and parents to develop a comprehensive system of employment preparation for students with disabilities. Agencies must work at developing a clear vision of and capacity for effective transition, leadership, and services. Such a vision should include a long-term goal of making vocational rehabilitation services available to all eligible students since maximum benefit can be gained when services are provided as early as possible to youth with disabilities as they transition to the world of work.

Challenges for Consumers

Workforce preparation services that address workplace know-how skills and technology training will take on an increasingly important role for individuals with disabilities as they compete in the new economy. Career development strategies need to be adapted to accommodate the emerging trends of the workplace, as no longer will training and education necessarily lead to long-term employment with a single employer. There is likely to be greater emphases placed upon follow-up services and support to retain employment in an economy characterized by a lack of security and a high rate of uncertainty.

The VR consumer will increasingly share the responsibility of keeping pace with the evolving workforce. In response, the counseling function will take on a facilitative role to ensure the availability of an efficient set of services based on the most current information available. Information on training and the labor market, as well as emerging technologies that are creating opportunities for telecommuting and entrepreneurial initiatives, will become tools for both the

counselor and consumer. This information and informed choice will undoubtedly transform the way disabled persons live, work, and play.

Empowered consumers will take on increasing responsibility in the development and execution of their individualized plans for employment. In this process, the consumer will need to be taught self-marketing skills, i.e., skills in presentation and communication and those associated with gaining access to and using information resources to the benefit of their employment goals. Knowledge of high-tech and low-tech resources will drive job-seeking programs for the consumer. Also necessary, as noted in Chapter II, are self-advocacy skills that encompass the same need to gain access to and use information resources, have knowledge of resources that provide information on consumer rights and responsibilities, and understand how to use presentation and communication skills to establish one's rights.

The characteristics of the flexible workforce will result in complex decision making models against the backdrop of public benefit programs. Although the counselor will be a valuable resource to the consumer in making informed decisions, it is ultimately the consumer who will be making informed decisions that affect cash assistance, in-kind health care, and other services received.

The changing economy and workplace will present very real opportunities for persons with disabilities and might limit the extensive and persistent attitudinal barriers evident today. Telecommuting, home-based, and self-employment are examples of trends that can benefit VR consumers who either have transportation concerns or are homebound. The VR counselor will need to seek out additional services to effectively bring these opportunities to the consumer.

The Research and Training Center on Rural Rehabilitation Services (Arnold, 1996) found

- People with a work disability are self-employed at a higher rate (12.2%) than people without disabilities (7.8%);
- Rural state agencies and counselors used self-employment as an employment outcome at a higher rate than urban state agencies and counselors; and
- Despite the common criticism that self-employment is used for businesses that aren't practical or are hobby oriented, businesses started by individuals with disabilities represent a wide range of mainstream businesses.

Kraus and Stoddard (1991) indicated that nearly as many people with disabilities report being self-employed as report working for federal, state, and local governments combined.

For some the road to self-employment is pursued because of frustration and for others as a way to realize a well thought out plan. The challenges are many and the opportunities are endless. Putting policy and implementation procedures in place to enhance the likelihood of successful business ventures should be a goal of the VR counselor and the consumer. As we look toward future trends in the workplace, we must look at the significance that small business plays in our economy, recognizing that self-employment is a viable alternative for individuals with disabilities and that there is a greater likelihood that these types of opportunities will be present in the years ahead.

Challenges for Community Partnerships

The Twenty-Third IRI (1997), *Developing Effective Partnerships With Employers as a Service Delivery Mechanism*, concluded that it is essential for VR agencies to partner effectively with other community organizations as well as employers, if they were to be effective and efficient in assisting consumers to achieve successful employment outcomes:

> When these sectors are working together, business and industry accrue significant savings and obtain a source of needed employees. State rehabilitation agencies and the nonprofit community rehabilitation programs gain assurance of job placement opportunities for people with disabilities. (p. 20)

With the emergence of consolidated, single point-of-entry programs into the service sector, the establishment of effective partnerships with these entities will expand the network of services and opportunities for VR consumers. Advances in technology will provide the ability to share information almost instantly and will enhance access to these services and resources.

VR agencies have a long, successful history of developing partnerships with community rehabilitation programs, other state agencies, service providers, and employment and training programs. With the passage of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (WIA), VR's expertise in developing community partnerships will play a key role in establishing VR as a major partner in the workforce development system and the one-stop centers.

WIA has reconfigured the way in which traditional partners will work together, creating a realignment of all the partners with which VR does, and will continue to do, business with. WIA calls for the establishment of a one-stop delivery system through which core employment-related services are provided and access is provided to additional employment and training services funded under the Act and other federal programs. The programs providing services through the one-stop system are referred to as one-stop partners. In addition to the traditional partners, VR will now collaborate with (a) welfare to work programs, (b) independent living centers, and (c) colleges and technical schools.

Designated one-stop partners are programs that must provide core services through the one-stop and include programs authorized under the Wagner-Peyser Act, the Adult Education and Literacy Title of the Act, the Rehabilitation Act Amendments of 1998, the Welfare-to-Work grants, Title V of the Older Americans Act, postsecondary vocational education under the Perkins Act, Trade Adjustment Assistance, veterans employment services, unemployment compensation laws, Community Service Block Grants, and employment and training activities carried out by the Department of Housing and Urban Development. The partners must enter into a written memorandum of understanding describing the services to be provided, how the costs of the services and operating costs of the system will be funded, methods for referral of individuals between the one-stop operators and partners for appropriate services and activities, and other matters deemed appropriate.

WIA also establishes a performance accountability system to assess the effectiveness of state and local areas in continuously improving workforce investment activities and to optimize the return on the investment of federal taxpayer dollars in such activities. Specific core indicators of

performance are laid out that will apply to the workforce development program, including rates of entry into unsubsidized employment by participants, retention in employment, earnings six months after entry, and skill/educational attainment documented through a recognized credential for those who enter unsubsidized employment.

States are to prepare and submit annual reports on progress in achieving state and local area performance measures. Among the information to be included in the report is the performance resulting from serving recipients of public assistance, out-of-school youth, veterans, individuals with disabilities, displaced homemakers, and other individuals. Throughout WIA it is stated clearly that the partners are to ensure coordination and avoid duplication between workforce development activities.

The Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, is now Title IV of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998, and it is evident that VR has entered a new environment, in which it is recognized as an employment and training program for individuals with disabilities and a partner in the workforce development system. In the past, VR would compete with other groups for jobs for consumers. Under the new system, VR must now establish strategic alliances that enhance partnerships and reduce duplication of efforts in putting people with disabilities to work. A significant part of this process will be the development of Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) that will define how VR will function within these strategic alliances.

As a partner in the system, VR will have access to labor market statistics, job openings, placement specialists, job readiness programs, outcome performance measurements of training programs, consumer assessment systems, and technology. It is imperative that VR effectively negotiate state and local level memoranda of understanding that clearly define roles and responsibilities of community partners and call for access and accessibility to the workforce development system. Memoranda of understanding will need to spell out the linkages, resources, and responsibilities of the community partners, including employers. However, the bottom line is that VR and its partners need to effectively work together to achieve a common purpose: improving the quality of the workforce and getting people to work.

Key Points

- Building on existing skills and adding new skills will be critical for VR counselors as they partner with consumers to ensure successful employment outcomes and attainment of the highest level of vocational functioning.
- Consumers will be strengthened by informed choice and become increasingly responsible for keeping pace with the changing workforce.
- A reconfiguration/realignment of the traditional partners with which VR does, and will continue to do, business is occurring as a result of labor market trends and WIA.

Chapter IV

Resources for Developing the Future Workforce

Resources for Developing the Future Workforce

Abstract

You will find in this chapter a variety of Internet resources intended to serve as entry points for the VR counselor to efficiently locate information specific to the emerging workforce. Each of these starting points will inevitably lead to an expansive assortment of additional information, so we have included suggestions that may help with your own personal research.

The resources in this chapter identify national and local labor markets, job banks in area, occupations, and career possibilities. They complement what counselors are doing in the field, and are tools available as they interact with consumers, employers, and community partners. These resources allow counselors to work collaboratively with consumers to gather career and employment information. More importantly, they can be used to teach consumers to use the Internet to access information for themselves, to organize their search, and to evaluate and use what they find to make informed career choices and successfully seek employment.

Utilizing the Internet as a counseling resource cannot be ignored, even if access isn't immediately available for the counselor or the consumer. Access to the Internet is available at most libraries and most local government employment centers. The chapter provides counselors with resources and refers them to information that can be retrieved by calling the source or visiting the Internet address listed.

All resource information included in this chapter is current as of September, 1999.

The Search for Useful Resources

The Internet is expanding at an explosive rate. As a result, resources on disabilities, labor market information, and trends in the workforce are increasing at a pace once thought unimaginable. Because this library of information can be exhausting to explore, we would like to offer five logical tips to use in your research.

- **Tip #1: Get organized**. Time spent on the Internet can simply vanish without proper organization. Structure your objectives in advance and make every effort not to become distracted by the Internet's vast array of places to go.

- **Tip #2: Have objectives drive the search for useful resources**. The VR counselor needs information to

- Learn about changes in the economy;
- Keep current on local and national labor market information;
- Understand how the economic and labor market information impact employment and those seeking employment;
- Form partnerships with employers, community entities and consumers to meet the goals for successful employment outcomes;
- Locate employment opportunities; and
- Teach consumers how to find and use Internet information.

The consumer needs information to

- Explore career interests and goals;
- Find information about employment opportunities;
- Apply for positions; and
- Make informed choices/decisions

- **Tip #3: Browse and leave a trail**. In seeking out useful resources you will move via links from one site to another very quickly. When browsing the Internet you often find places to which you will want to return. Use your browser to set a "bookmark" or a "favorite place" marker when you locate a site of particular interest to you. This will allow you return to that site quickly and expedite any future efforts you will make.

- **Tip #4: Evaluate the information**. When was the site last revised? What are the author's credentials? Is it useful information?

- **Tip #5: Share the information**. Share with others and you will find the pool of knowledge about how to achieve successful employment outcomes greatly expanded.

Traditional Resources

Many of the services available on the Internet are traditional ones in a new setting or format. Some will be local, regional, national, or no specific geographical range (e.g., newspaper classified ads; direct business postings; specialty job category publications [academia, medical]; trade journals listings; and job fair information. Some sites allow a potential job seeker to find specific job openings and job recruiters to find potential hires through a database of submitted resumes. Yellow pages are available for information such as addresses and phone numbers, and detail maps and driving directions are available for geographical information.

Helpful Resources

State websites. Each state has its own site with the following information usually available:

- Employment services
- Labor market information
- Occupational outlooks and industry projections
- Career development information

- State data (employment/unemployment rates; economic situation for state, metro areas, counties, municipalities)
- How to contact offices, agencies, individuals
- How to get additional information
- Job openings, online job search
- Employment, training and education resources
- Resources, publications available
- Additional services available (e.g., health, child care, medical, housing)

State Occupational Information Coordinating Committee. If you are looking for information on education and training, the labor market, or career development resources in your state, your State Occupational Information Coordinating Committee (SOICC) is a good place to start. SOICCs help state agencies deliver useful occupational and career information to local institutions and individuals who need it in schools, One Stop Career Centers, job training programs, other community-based counseling centers, and educational settings. SOICC roles vary, but most have contributed significantly to

- Developing occupational information systems (software) and publications tailored to the needs of education and workforce planners at the state and local levels;

- Helping counselors, job trainers, and teachers get useful career information for students or consumers through computerized career information delivery systems, tabloid newspapers, and other media that supply information on education and career opportunities in the state and nationally; and

- Offering training to help counselors use occupational information in their work with individuals who are seeking employment/planning careers.

Each state has a State Occupational Information Coordinating Committee. Simply call for the above information and ask if there is a fee. (See Appendix D for the SOICC listing in your state.)

Labor Market Information. Each state has a Labor Market Information (LMI) Division that is funded by the Bureau of Labor Statistics to gather economic information for that state. Labor Market Information will provide you with a picture of your local labor market workforce, local diversity, changes and trends in your local workforce, demographic information and the composition of local occupations. As a counselor, you need to understand and have this local economic information readily available to consumers. There is a variety of information available from each state:

- Occupational wages
- Occupational projections
- Company information
- Career/job seeker tools
- Local labor market overviews
- Demographic information

- Counselor training services
- General economic data: unemployment rates, industries, job growth rates

For information, contact the Labor Market Information Division in your state (see Appendix E).

O*NET. O*NET, the Occupational Information Network, is an easy-to-use database that runs on a Windows-based personal computer. It contains comprehensive information on job requirements and worker competencies. O*NET replaces the Department of Labor's *Dictionary of Occupational Titles* and offers a more dynamic framework for exploring the world of work. The main features allow users to search for information organized within the O*NET Content Model that contains 483 descriptors covering skills, knowledges, abilities, generalized work activities, interests, work values and occupation-specific tasks. Information and options available for ordering O*NET products can be found at the O*NET web site (http://www.doleta.gov/programs/onet/).

U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. While the Labor Market Information Division gathers and produces economic data for local areas and a single state, the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) provides valuable statistics for the nation. National data can be useful when there are no local data available or you need to compare your state to the nation. The occupational projections, wage data, and other information are also extremely useful to VR counselors. The following publications are particularly useful for counselors and are available for a nominal fee that covers printing costs. The material in the publications is public domain, so you may choose to order one to share or make copies for your office.

Occupational Outlook Quarterly. The Quarterly provides national data that will help you to

- Identify occupations offering the most new jobs
- Explore career interests and goals
- Discover new and emerging occupations
- Transition from school to work
- Tailor education to career goals

As a subscriber, you would also receive articles by labor market experts from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. These articles will offer the following:

- Employment projections for 250 occupations
- Analysis of employment trends in key industries
- Hard earnings data by occupation and education level
- Exploration of job clusters
- Examination of education, experience, and training requirements
- Coverage of work-based learning programs
- Updates on technological aids to career exploration

To subscribe to the Quarterly, call the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office at (202) 512-2250.

Occupational Outlook Handbook. Also available is the Occupational Outlook Handbook that offers detailed information of hundreds of occupations, including the nature of the work, job training and other qualifications, employment outlook, earnings, work conditions, and sources of additional information. Because the information in this publication is based on nationwide trends, the outlook and earnings information will vary from one area to another and you should also refer to local area data obtained from your local Labor Market Information Division (listed previously). The information is based on data from a variety of sources, including business firms, trade associations, labor unions, professional societies, educational institutions, and government agencies. This publication is produced every two years. To order the publication, call the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office at (202) 512-2250.

Occupational Projections and Training Data. Occupational Projections and Training Data is published every two years as a companion to the Occupational Outlook Handbook. It focuses on the information needs of education planning officials, although there are data and analyses that may interest counselors and consumers. This report contains statistics on current and projected occupational employment and on completers of institutional education and training programs. There are also occupational data on worker characteristics: the percent who are wage and salary workers, the percent who left specific occupations, and the percent of workers who are part-time, female, African-American and Hispanic. Age and industry distribution are also presented. A copy of Occupational Projections and Training Data is available for $5. To order the publication, call the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office at (202) 512-2250.

Local Government Employment Centers

You can utilize other government agency services to benefit consumers. For example, there are government employment centers in your area that have additional resources available such as brochures and publications for job seekers, job referrals, on-site Internet access, or classes on resume writing or interviewing. Take the time to find out what your local government employment center has to offer. You will find offices near you listed in the telephone book in the *government* section.

Job Banks

The opportunity to find a job via the Internet is quickly increasing with job finding currently the second biggest source of Internet commercial revenue. Each year millions of jobs are listed by employers via the Internet where job seekers can search through job banks and submit their resumes. Typically, job seekers do not pay to use the services but businesses are often charged a fee. Often the ad is set up so that the respondent can fill out an on-line form and return it directly to the company to apply or they can send a pre-made electronic resume to the company of interest. There are numerous job banks available (see Appendix F for Job Bank listings).

America's Job Bank. America's Job Bank is one of the many available job banks, listing millions of jobs each year for millions of employers and job seekers. It is found on the Internet at http://www.ajb.dni.us. If you don't have a computer with Internet access, you can use computers at your local employment service office and other public locations, such as libraries, colleges, universities, and military installations. Also available through America's Job Bank is *America's*

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Talent Bank. This service provides job seekers the ability to list their resumes on the Internet. An additional service called *Job Scout* will automatically notify job seekers via email whenever a job that matches their skills is listed. Consumers can get help to

- Assess skills in relation to employment goals;
- Find training programs;
- Prepare for an interview;
- Learn job-hunting tips to make the search easier;
- Access information on the labor market and careers

Self-Employment Resources

Association of Small Business Development Center. Offers free counseling on business development, expanding your business, and growing your business. Counselors will work with its customers long-term. Contact the national center for a referral to a local center near you.

Voice: 703-271-8700
Fax: 703-271-8701
E-mail: info@asbdc-us.org
Website: www.asbdc-us.org.

Small Business Administration. Provides financial, technical, and management assistance to help persons start, run, and grow their businesses. A variety of programs and assistance available.

Answer Desk: 800-U-ASK-SBA
TDD: 704-344-6640
Fax: 202-205-7064
Website: www.sba.gov

Service Corp of Retired Executives (SCORE) offers free small business counseling. Has local chapters throughout U.S.; toll free at 800-634-0245. E-mail counseling available at website: www.score.org. *Women's Business Center* provides assistance and/or training in finance, management, marketing, and the Internet, as well as specialized topics such as home-based businesses. Website: www.sbaonline.sba.gov/womeninbusiness. *Minority Enterprise Development* provides business development assistance to socially and economically disadvantaged business persons. Website: www.sbaonline.sba.gov/med.

Disability Resources

The Internet has endless resources for rehabilitation professionals and persons with disabilities that provide information and access to disability-specific and related topics. The resources available range from specialized disability types, disability support groups, and federal, state, and nonprofit organizations that work with and for persons with disabilities.

• Better Life on Line	www.hsv.tis.net/dymedias
• disABILITY	www.eskimo.com/~jlubin
• Center on Information Technology Accommodations	www.gsa.gov/coca
• Research and Training Center at University of Wisconsin-Stout	www.rtc.uwstout.edu

Government Resources

• Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) - Regional Continuing Education Programs (RCEPs) - Projects With Industry - Centers for Independent Living - Training Programs/Job Openings	www.ed.gov/offices/OSERS/RSA
• National Rehabilitation Information Center	www.naric.com
• National Clearinghouse of Rehabilitation Training Materials (NCRTM) - Rehabilitation Recruitment Center (RRC)	www.nchrtm.okstate.edu
• President's Committee on Employment of Persons With Disabilities	www.50pcepd.gov/pcesd
• U.S. Department of Education	www.ed.gov
• National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research - Rehabilitation Engineering Research Centers (RERCs) - Rehabilitation Research and Training Centers (RRTCs)	www.ed.gov/offices/OSERS/NIDRR

General Resources

For general information visit the following Internet sites:

• The Economic Policy Network	www.epn.org
• Economic Policy Institute	www.epinet.org
• Employment Policy Foundation	www.epf.org
• Employee Benefit Research Institute	www.ebri.org
• Bureau of Labor Statistics	http://stats.bls.gov/blshome.htm
• Government Statistics	http://stats.bls.gov:80/oreother.htm
• U.S. Census Bureau	http://www.census.gov
• 1990 Census	http://venus.census.gov/cdrom/lookup
• U.S. Department of Labor	http://www.dol.gov

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Key Points

- Internet resources are valuable tools for you, the VR counselor, as you interact with consumers, employers, and community partners.

- If you or your consumers don't have access to the Internet, find another source in your community.

- Be organized in your research, have your information needs drive the search, bookmark and evaluate Internet information–and teach consumers to do these also.

- Before you move on to the information highway, a reminder: One of a VR counselor's best sources of data is local businesses. Don't get trapped in your office with your computer and mountains of information. Contact local employers on a regular basis, develop relationships/partnerships with them and the staff at temp agencies. Find out who is hiring, for what positions, who is expanding, laying off. A periodic call to the local economic development agency can be productive.

Chapter V

Assessing a Vocational Rehabilitation Agency's Capacity to Meet Future Workforce Needs

Assessing a Vocational Rehabilitation Agency's Capacity to Meet Future Workforce Needs

Abstract

Chapter III looked at skills needed by the vocational rehabilitation counselor of the future, indicating that counselors will need new and enhanced skills to provide effective rehabilitation/ employment services. Likewise, agencies will need to assess their capacity to meet future workforce needs. While maintaining vocational preparation as an integral part of a service delivery system, we argue that it is critical for leadership to make employment the organizational focus in order to stay competitive in the workforce development arena. The assessment should start at the top of the organization and work its way throughout. This chapter provides a framework and the tools for a VR agency to assess its capacity to be a major player in the current and future workforce environment. Based on the nationally recognized and standardized Baldrige Award Criteria for Performance Excellence, this model can be readily used by agency staff at all levels. The agency with effective practices will be in the best position to meet consumer needs and demands in the highly competitive employment world of the future.

Performance Excellence

This chapter is organized around the Sterling Criteria for Organizational Performance Excellence, developed by the Florida Sterling Council. The criteria are based upon the *Baldrige Award Criteria for Performance Excellence* (2000) that are the basis for organizational self-assessments. The Criteria have three important roles: (a) to help improve organizational performance practices and capabilities; (b) to facilitate communication and sharing of best practices information among U.S. organizations of all types; and (c) to serve as a working tool for understanding and managing performance, and guiding planning and training. The material in this chapter has been adapted for Florida's public, private, education, and health care sectors and can serve as a tool for agencies as they examine their organizational structure and processes as they relate to employment outcomes. Florida's model demonstrates that the Baldrige Award Criteria can readily be used and adapted by other states and all organizations committed to continuous quality improvement. Additional information on the Florida model is available at http://www.floridasterling.com.

We define organizational performance excellence as the ability to meet current workforce needs, forecast future needs, and be in a position to meet those needs when the time comes.

The Sterling Criteria Examination

As an agency assesses its readiness to move forward in the new environment, the categories listed below, representing *key aspects* of organizational structure and processes common to all organizations, can be used as a guide *in the self-assessment* of capacity to meet future workforce needs.

- **Leadership**. Examines senior leaders' personal leadership and involvement in creating and sustaining values, organizational directions, performance expectations, customer focus, and a leadership system that promotes performance excellence. Also examined is how the values and expectations are integrated into the organization's leadership system, including how the organization continuously learns and improves, and addresses its societal responsibilities and community involvement.

- **Strategic planning**. Examines how the organization sets strategic directions and how it determines key action plans. Also examined is how the plans are translated into an effective performance management system.

- **Customer and market knowledge**. Examines how the organization determines requirements and expectations of customers and markets. Also examined is how the organization enhances relationships with customers and determines their satisfaction.

- **Information and analysis**. Examines the management and effectiveness of the use of data and information to support key organization processes and the organization's performance management system.

- **Human resource development and management**. Examines how the work force is enabled to develop and utilize its full potential, aligned with the organization's objectives. Also examined are the organization's efforts to build and maintain an environment conducive to performance excellence, full participation, and personal and organizational growth.

- **Process management**. Examines the key aspects of process management, including customer-focused design, product and service delivery processes, support processes, and partnering processes. Also examined is how key processes are designed, effectively managed, and improved to achieve better performance.

- **Business results**. Examines the organization's performance and improvement in key business areas–customer satisfaction, financial and marketplace performance, human resource, supplier and partner performance, and operational performance. Also examined are performance levels relative to competitors.

The Sterling Criteria Concepts and Core Values

As an agency begins its self-assessment process, it is important to be aware of the *key concepts* embedded in the Sterling Criteria. They represent the foundation upon which successful

programs are built, and it is these values that should guide an organization as it strives to attain its vision and mission. As you work through the Key Evaluation Questions, incorporate these concepts into your assessment of the agency.

- **Customer-driven quality**. Customers are the final judges of quality. Thus, quality must take into account all product and service features and characteristics that contribute value to the customers and lead to customer satisfaction, preference, and retention.

- **Leadership**. An organization's senior leaders need to set direction and create a customer orientation, clear and visible values, and high expectations. Senior leaders ensure the development of the organization's quality values, vision, mission, and goals and guide the sustained pursuit of quality performance objectives.

- **Continuous improvement and learning**. Organizations should pursue regular cycles of planning, execution, and evaluation of every process and system to attain ever-higher quality and customer satisfaction. Continuous improvement refers to both incremental and breakthrough improvement. Learning refers to adaptation to change, leading to new goals and/or approaches.

- **Employee participation and development**. An organization's success depends increasingly on the knowledge, skills, and motivation of its workforce. Organizations will be successful only if they make a commitment to ensuring their workforce is diverse, continuously trained, multi-skilled, adaptable, and empowered. Employee success depends increasingly on having opportunities to learn and to practice new skills.

- **Fast response**. Success in competitive markets demands ever-shorter cycles for new or improved product or service introduction. Organizations must have a rapid and flexible response to customer requirements. Time improvements often drive simultaneous improvements in organization, quality, and productivity.

- **Design quality and prevention**. Organizations need to incorporate quality from the beginning when designing/developing new programs and services as a way of preventing problems and maximizing efficiency in service delivery.

- **Long-range view of the future**. Organizational leadership requires a strong future orientation and willingness to make long-term commitments to key stakeholder-customers, employees, suppliers, the public, and the community. Anticipating change and preparing the workforce to meet those changes are at the core of a long-range outlook.

- **Management by fact**. Information and data are critical to sound planning, performance measurement and improvement, and quality operations. Measurements must derive from the organization's strategy and provide critical and timely data and information about key processes, outputs, and results. Data and analysis support organization planning, reviewing performance, or with best practices benchmarks.

- **Partnership development**. Organizations must develop internal partnering of individuals and teams to accomplish their goals and enhance overall performance. External partnering with customers, suppliers, and other organizations fosters continued growth and success.

- **Organization responsibility and citizenship**. An organization's leadership needs to stress its responsibilities to the public and practice good citizenship. Responsibility refers to basic expectations of the organization-business ethics protection of public health, public safety, and the environment. Practicing good citizenship refers to leadership and public responsibility for improvement in healthcare, education, industry practices, and resource conservation in the community.

- **Results focus**. An organization's performance measurements need to focus on key results. The true measure of a quality system are the results that can be attributed back to approaches deployed throughout the organization. It is imperative to build matrices that help an organization assess its progress toward organization goals.

Key Evaluation Questions

To determine where the employment of individuals is on your agency's radar screen, answer the key evaluation questions in the categories that follow. Agencies that take the time to examine their structure and processes as they relate to employment outcomes should be able to identify their *readiness to meet the demands* of persons with disabilities and the employment community.

Starting With the Leadership

Leadership is in the unique position to communicate to all stakeholders, customers and partners that employment of persons with disabilities is the agency's *raison d'être*. All critical activities of the agency should have some connection to employment outcomes. The Sterling Criteria model indicates that it is the leadership that sets the organization's direction, and creates its values and goals.

Core Values and Concepts

Results focus, Organization responsibility and citizenship.

Key Evaluation Questions:

- *From the outset, how does leadership communicate and reinforce that employment of persons with disabilities is the most valued outcome?*

- *How does leadership communicate clear performance expectations from staff at all levels?*

Strategic Planning

An agency with no strategic plan, more than likely, is unsure of its present capacities and has a very fuzzy vision of the future. In terms of meeting the workforce needs of the future, this is perhaps the most critical category.

Core Concepts

Long-range view of the future, Management by fact.

Key Evaluation Questions:

- *How does the agency assess its capabilities–human resources, technology, and business processes–as they relate to employment of persons with disabilities?*
- *How does the agency assess the competitive environment? (This is especially critical in this era of privatization.)*
- *How does the agency assess its supplier or partner capabilities? (If employers are viewed as partners, this is an absolutely essential process.)*
- *How does the agency develop a strategic plan that relates directly to employment of persons with disabilities?*
- *How does the agency translate the strategic plan into an action plan that is clearly understood at all levels and by all stakeholders?*
- *How does the agency assess whether its structure is properly aligned to successfully implement the action plan? (Are there sufficient resources or are existing resources adequately utilized?)*

Evaluation of Organizational Performance

Agencies seeking continuous improvement must examine the use of data and information needed to support its business processes. For most rehabilitation agencies, this means going significantly beyond the collection and use of federally required data. This effort should include the utilization of information on the number of employer contacts, meetings, and placements/employment obtained. Databases of employer accounts and applicant pools exist or are being developed in a growing number of rehabilitation agencies.

Core Concepts

Customer-driven quality, Design quality and prevention, Fast response, and Results focus.

Key Evaluation Questions:

- *How does the information that is currently collected relate to employment processes?*
- *What new information must be collected to assess organizational performance?*
- *How is information used to assess organizational performance as it relates to employment of persons with disabilities?*
- *What is the validity and reliability of the information and data?*
- *How accessible and user friendly are the information and data?*
- *How is the information used to set goals, performance standards and the evaluation of agency performance?*

Process Management/Performance Results

Over the past few years, most VR agencies have undertaken initiatives to streamline processes and focus on outcomes. Agencies that continually examine their processes probably have data on the impact of the streamlining upon key employment outcomes.

Core Concepts

Continuous improvement and learning, Management by fact, Design quality and Prevention.

Key Evaluation Questions:

- *How does the agency review and evaluate the service delivery process?*
- *How does the agency provide current levels and trends for key performance measures?*

Human Resource Development

The federal mandates of the Comprehensive System of Personnel Development (CSPD) will require vocational rehabilitation agencies to devote more attention and resources to their human resource development system. However, agencies should, in the context of CSPD, evaluate how their hiring and in-service training activities meet the demands of individuals with disabilities and employers.

Core Concepts

Continuous improvement and learning, Long range view of the future, Employee participation and development.

Key Evaluation Questions

- *How is human resource planning evaluated and improved to ensure the linkage of workforce practice to strategic plans?*
- *How are goals, standards, and performance measures used for monitoring and improving human resource practice?*
- *How do the agency's compensation and recognition approaches reinforce employee effectiveness in achieving high performance objectives?*
- *Does the agency have a process to evaluate and improve employee performance and recognition system?*
- *How does the agency use education and training to build employee capabilities?*
- *How does the agency assess and improve employee satisfaction?*

Customer Satisfaction and Focus

In the Title IV-Rehabilitation Act Amendments of 1998, a proposed indicator of service effectiveness is customer satisfaction. Under the Workforce Investment Act of 1998, standards are required for employer satisfaction.

Core Concepts

Customer-driven quality, Fast response.

Key Evaluation Questions:

- *How does the agency provide easy access to enable customers to seek information and assistance and to comment and complain?*
- *What is the process for handling complaints and feedback?*
- *What is the process for follow-up with customers on products, services and transactions?*

To the Leadership of the VR Agency

Your agency can be prepared to meet the future workforce needs of individuals with disabilities and employers if:

- ☐ Your agency can facilitate access to the open job market via the Internet.
- ☐ Your agency can facilitate access to the hidden job market.
- ☐ Your agency has the capacity to fluently speak the language of business and industry.
- ☐ Your agency can competently interact with business and industry.
- ☐ Your agency can provide timely information on current and projected labor market trends.
- ☐ Your agency assesses customer satisfaction with services and uses the information to improve service delivery.
- ☐ Your agency has a management information system that can provide timely, valid, and reliable information to stakeholders.
- ☐ Your agency sets production goals for employment outcomes and recognizes and rewards strong performances.
- ☐ Your agency can provide or facilitate the provision of technical expertise related to alternative employment, including self-employment.
- ☐ Your agency has a strategic plan in which employment of persons with disabilities is the focus.
- ☐ In your agency, employment of persons with disabilities is the number one priority.

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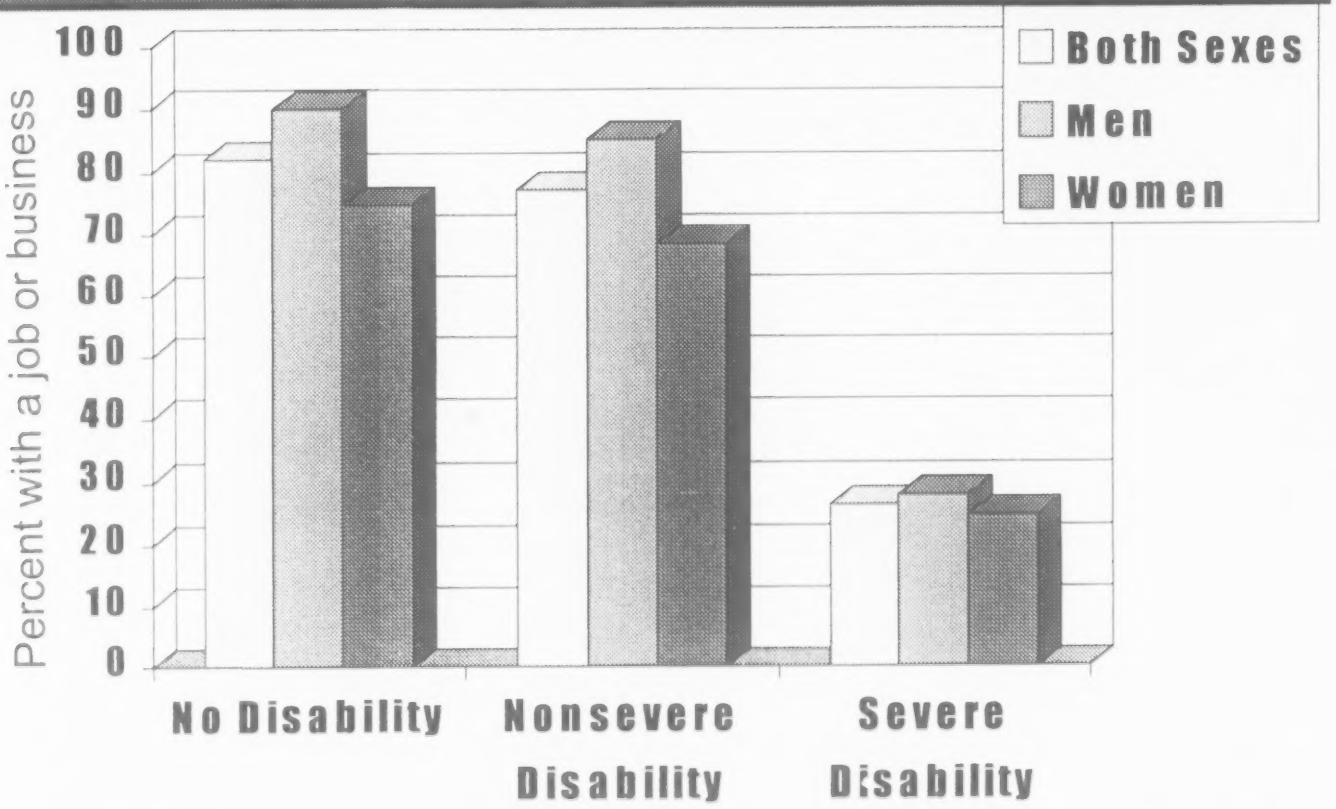
Appendix A

Employment rates are lower for people with a disability and much lower for those with severe disability



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Source: The U.S. Census Bureau

Appendix B

Education and Training Changes

OLD

- Lecture, Chalk talk
- Campus / School based
- Education period = 6 - 22
- Semester Classes
- Broad degrees (BA, MS, PhD)
- Accreditation
- Vocational Separate from Academic

NEW

- Experiential Learning
- Distance Learning / Computer delivery
- Education period = Lifetime
- Just in Time, Right size Modules
- Certificates of Competency
- Certification of Quality Assurance
- Academic and Vocational Blended

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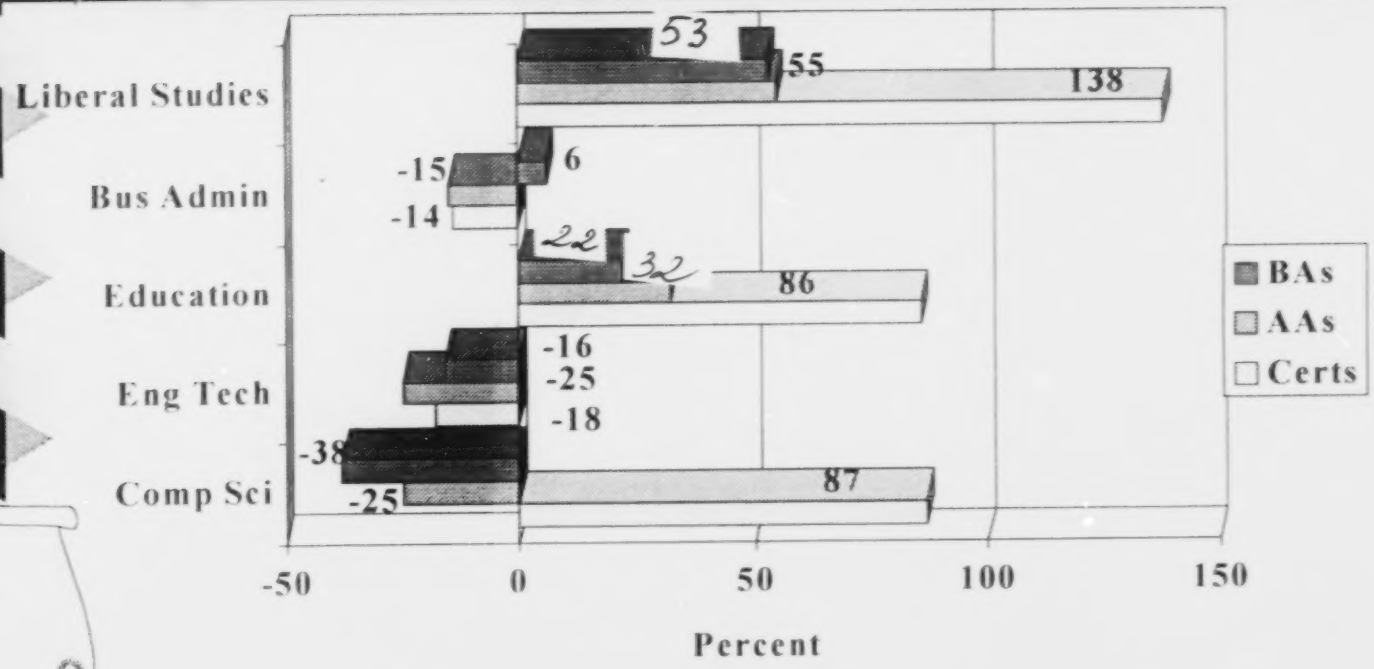
Source: National Alliance of Business

Appendix C

Change in Certificates and Degrees: 1984 to 1994



Source: National Center for Education Statistics

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Appendix D

State Occupational Information Coordinating Committee (SOICC) Listing

Alabama
(334) 242-2990
http://soiccal.huntingdon.edu/SOICC/default.ow

Alaska
(907) 465-4518

Arizona
(602) 542-3871

Arkansas
(501) 682-3159
http://cccoz@yahoo.com

California
(916) 323-6544
http://www.soicc.ca.gov/

Colorado
(303) 620-4981
http://www.cosoicc.org

Connecticut
(860) 263-6258
http://www.ctdol.state.ct.us

Delaware
(302) 761-8053
http://www.oolmi.net

District of Columbia
(202) 724-7631
http://209.122.85.51/dcoicc.html

Florida
(850) 488-1048
http://lmi.floridajobs.org

Georgia
(404) 656-3177
http://www.dol.state.ga.us/lmi

Hawaii
(808) 586-8750
http://www.pixi.com/~hsoicc/

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Idaho
(208) 334-3705
http://www.sde.state.id.us/cis

Illinois
(217) 785-0789
http://www.ioicc.state.il.us

Indiana
(317) 233-5099
http://www.dwd.state.in.us/

Iowa
(515) 242-5032
http://www.state.ia.us/government/wd/isoicc/

Kansas
(316) 431-4950
http://www.entk.dhr.ink.org

Kentucky
(502) 564-4258
http://www.state.ky.us/agencies/wforce/koicc.htm

Louisiana
(225) 342-5151
http://www.ldol.state.la.us

Maine
(207) 624-6390

Maryland
(410) 767-2952
http://www.careernet.state.md.us

Massachusetts
(617) 626-5718
http://macis@detma.org

Michigan
(517) 241-4000 or 1(800) 285-works
http://www.michlmi.org or http://www.mois.org

Minnesota
(651) 296-2072
http://www.des.state.mn.us/lmi/careers

Mississippi
(601) 949-2216
http://www.noicc.gov

Missouri
(573) 751-3800
http://www.works.state.mo.us/moicc

Montana
(406) 444-0303 or 1(800) 354-8830
http://jsd.dli.mt.gov/lmi/mcis/htm

Nebraska
(402) 471-9953
http://www.dol.state.ne.us

Nevada
(775) 687-4550
http://www.detrjoblink.org

New Hampshire
(603) 228-3349
http://www.state.nh.us/soiccnh

New Jersey
(609) 292-2682
http://wnjpin.state.nj.us/OneStopCareerCenter/SOICC/

New Mexico
(505) 841-8455
http://www.#3.state.nm.us/dol/soicc.htm

New York
(518) 457-3805

North Carolina
(919) 733-6700
http://www.soicc.state.nc.us/soicc/

North Dakota
(701) 328-9733
http://www.state.nd.us/jsnd/soicc.htm

Ohio
(614) 466-1109
http://lmi.state.oh.us/ooicc/ooicc.htm

Oklahoma
(405) 743-5198
http://www.okvotech.org/soicc/index.htm

Oregon
(503) 947-1233

Pennsylvania
(717) 787-6466
http://www.lmi.state.pa.us/palmids

Puerto Rico
(787) 723-7110

Rhode Island
(401) 272-0830
http://www.det.state.ri.us/webdev/lmi/rioicc/rioicchm.html

South Carolina
(803) 737-2733
http://www.scois.org/

South Dakota
(605) 626-2314
http://www.state.sd.us/dol/lmic

Tennessee
(615) 741-6451

Texas
(512) 837-7484 or 1(800) 822-7526
http://www.soicc.capnet.state.tx.us

Utah
(801) 526-9340

Vermont
(802) 828-4394
http://www.det.state.vt.us

Virginia
(804) 786-7496
http://www.vec.state.va.us/

Washington
(360) 438-4803
http://www.wa.gov/esd/lmea/soicc/sohome.htm

West Virginia
(304) 766-2687
http://www.wvsoicc.org

Wisconsin
(608) 267-9611
http://www.dwd.state.wi.us/dwelmi

Wyoming
(307) 473-3801
http://lmi.state.wy.us/

Appendix E

Labor Market Information Division Listings

Alabama
(334) 242-8855
http://www.dir.state.al.us/alalmi.htm

Alaska
(907) 465-4500
http://www.state.ak.us

Arizona
(602) 542-3871
http://www.de.state.az.us

Arkansas
(501) 682-3198
http://www.state.ar.us/esd/

California
(916) 262-2162
http://www.calmis.cahwnet.gov

Colorado
(303) 620-4856
http://lmi.cdle.state.co.us

Connecticut
(860) 263-6275
http://www.ctdol.state.ct.us

Delaware
(302) 761-8052
http://www.oolmi.net

District of Columbia
(202) 724-7213
http://209.122.85.51

Florida
(850) 488-1048
http://lmi.floridajobs.org

Georgia
(404) 656-3177
http://www.dol.state.ga.us/lmi

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Hawaii
(808) 586-8999
http://www.hawaii.gov/workforce

Idaho
(208) 334-6168
http://www.labor.state.id.us

Illinois
(217) 785-0789
http://www.ioicc.state.il.us

Indiana
(317) 232-1920
http://www.dwd.state.in.us

Iowa
(515) 281-3020
http://www.state.ia.us/iwd/ris/lmi

Kansas
(785) 296-5058
http://laborstats.hr.state.ks.us

Kentucky
(502) 564-7976
http://www.des.state.ky.us

Louisiana
(225) 342-3140
http://www.ldol.state.la.us

Maine
(207) 287-2271
http://www.state.me.us/labor/lmis/maine.html

Maryland
(410) 767-2250
http://www.dllr.state.md.us

Massachusetts
(617) 626-5744

Michigan
(313) 876-5427
http://www.michlmi-org

Minnesota
(651) 296-4087
http://www.des.state.mn.us/lmi/

Mississippi
(601) 961-7425
http://www.mesc.state.ms.us

Missouri
(573) 751-3595
http://www.works.state.mo.us

Montana
(406) 444-2430 or 1(800) 541-3904
http://jsd.dli.mt.gov/lmi/lmi.htm

Nebraska
(402) 471-2600
http://www.dol.state.ne.us

Nevada
(775) 687-4550
http://www.detrjoblink.org

New Hampshire
(603) 228-4124
http://www.nhes.state.nh.us/lmipage.htm

New Jersey
(609) 292-0099
http://www.state.nj.us/labor/ira

New Mexico
(505) 841-8645
http://www.dol.state.nm.us

New York
(518) 457-6369
http://www.labor.state.ny.us

North Carolina
(919) 733-2936
http://www.esc.state.nc.us/html/lmi.html

North Dakota
(701) 328-2868
http://www.state.nd.us/jsnd

Ohio
(614) 752-9494
http://www.lmi.state.oh.us

Oklahoma
(405) 557-7261
http://www.oesc.state.ok.us/lmi

Oregon
(503) 947-1267
http://olmis.ent.state.or.us

Pennsylvania
(717) 787-6466
http://www.lmi.state.pa.us/palmids

Puerto Rico
(787) 754-5385

Rhode Island
(401) 222-3706
http://www.dlt.state.ri.us/webdev/lmi/lmihome.html

South Carolina
(803) 737-2660
http://www.sces.org

South Dakota
(605) 626-2314
http://www.state.sd.us/dol/lmic

Tennessee
(615) 741-2284
http://www.state.tn.us/empsec

Texas
(512) 491-4922
http://www.twc.state.tx.us

Utah
(801) 526-9340
http:www.dws.state.ut.us/wi/workforce.htm

Vermont
(802) 828-4153
http://www.det.state.vt.us

Virginia
(804) 786-8223
http://www.vec.state.va.us/

Washington
(360) 438-4873
http://www.wa.gov/esd/lmea

West Virginia
(304) 558-2660
http://www.state.wv.us/bep/

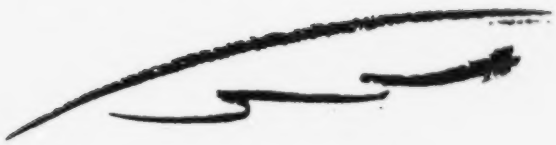
Wisconsin
(608) 266-2930
http://www.dwd.state.wi.us/dwelmi

Wyoming
(307) 473-3801
http://lmi.state.wy.us/

Appendix F

Job Bank Listings

AARP	www.aarp.org/bulletin/webjobs
Career Magazine	www.careermag.com
Career Mosaic	www.careermosaic.com/
Career Web	www.cweb.com/
Contract Employment Weekly	www.ceweekly.wa.com
ContractJobs Com	www.contractjobs.com
Espan	www.espan.net
Federal Jobs	www.federaljobs.net/index
Federal Jobs Digest	www.jobsfed.com/
Help-Wanted Page	www.helpwantedpage.com/
Interim Services, Inc.	www.interim.com
Internet Career Connection	www.iccweb.com
Job Bank	www.jobank.com
Job Center	www.jobcenter.com/
Job-Hunt	www.job-hunt.org
JobTrack	www.jobtrack.com
Job Trak	www.jobtrak.com
Job Web	www.jobweb.com
Minorities' Job Bank	www.minorities-jb.com
Monster Board	www.monster.com/
Nation Job Network	www.nationjob.com/
Navy Jobs	www.navyjobs.com
Online Career Center	www.occ.com
The Job Connection	www.jobconnection.com/
U.S. Census Bureau	www.census.gov/



STOUT

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN